The Silence of Transparency: A Critical Analysis of the Relationship between the Organisational Salary Environment and the Gender and Gender/Ethnic Pay Gap in UK Higher Education

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Abstract

The UK's 2017 gender pay gap (GPG) reporting regulations furthered the growing pay 'transparency agenda' as a tool to end pay inequality. Yet, discussing one's pay remains taboo. British universities have faced transparency pressure for years, but higher education's (HE) GPG and gender/ethnic pay gap persist. To explore this puzzle, an original analytical framework is constructed, which builds upon Acker's (2006a, 2006b) inequality regimes. The organisational salary environment (OSE) provides this analytical framework, to model the mutually constitutive influence of employer strategies, social norms, and employee behaviour on the capacity of pay transparency to reduce pay inequality.

Critical analysis of the pay 'transparency agenda' performance inside two British universities involves a multi-layered, multi-strategy approach, including secondary earnings data, an original social pay comparison survey, semi-structured interviews with remuneration policy shapers, union representatives, and academics, alongside organisational pay (and related progression) policies. The empirical findings reveal for the first time that professors are 3.6 times more likely to discuss their pay than junior academics, whose pay is collectively bargained. The OSE analysis unveils a multi-dimensional 'pay transparency' paradox. There is a *silence of transparency*; pay transparency practices serve to legitimise processes that reinforce pay inequality and to individualise inequality concerns as anomalies *because* of the 'transparent' pay practises. The income-talk taboo reinforces managerial control, whilst 'deviant' social pay comparison is insufficient to overcome inequality-reinforcing hierarchical power structures.

This thesis makes several original contributions, including modelling workplace pay transparency (mal)function through the OSE, which builds on Acker's (2006a, 2006b) inequality regimes; empirically demonstrating pay discussion patterns and dynamics, filling a gap in the feminist sociological GPG literature by interrogating accepted practices and norms to unveil the 'pay transparency' paradox; and developing policy and pay setting implications to strengthen the pay 'transparency agenda', both within the UK's HE sector and across the UK.

Statement of Originality

I, Emily Danielle Pfefer, confirm that the research included within this thesis is my own work or that where it has been carried out in collaboration with, or supported by others, that this is duly acknowledged below and my contribution indicated. Previously published material is also acknowledged below.

I attest that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge break any UK law, infringe any third party's copyright or other Intellectual Property Right, or contain any confidential material.

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I have not formally published any parts of this thesis. An early Chapter 3 version as a conference paper (not reviewed) is online: https://ecpr.eu/Filestore/PaperProposal/6edded5b-63ff-4a5c-bb3e-62307c9e728a.pdf. I presented the paper *The Cloak of Silence – A Review Paper Regarding the Prevalence, Hierarchical Foundations and Gendered Nature of the Culture of Pay Secrecy* at the ECPR Graduate Student Conference in Tartu, Estonia, July 2016.

I have referred to key ideas from this thesis in a Call for Papers for a stream I planned to co-convene at the Gender, Work & Organisation 11th Biennial International Interdisciplinary Conference 2020, entitled: "Transforming Transparency? The strength and limitations of voluntary and regulative approaches to transparency in the context of the gender pay gap", now postponed to 2021.

Motivation for this thesis stemmed from analysis of the legislative process of US and UK statute to protect the right to discuss pay in my MSc dissertation (supervised by Professor Jane Lewis) 'Policy Debates on Wage Transparency in the US and the UK and Their Implications for Gender Pay Equality,' (unpublished). This provided understanding of the UK legislative context and spurred my desire to further interrogate why pay discussions may need protection.

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Mr. Timothy J. Hughes. As my inestimable high school speech and debate coach, he opened my eyes to effective critical analysis and communication. He supported my first significant piece of writing about the gender pay gap. He tragically lost his health battles a few months before this thesis's completion. I hope is looking down, proud in the knowledge that the 'sleeping tiger' that he trained has been able to achieve this important work.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The year 2020 marks 50 years since the hard-won passage of the UK's Equal Pay Act (EPA)[1] 1970 and 45 years since the European Community's Equal Pay Directive (75/117/EC) designated the principle of equal pay for work of equal value (O'Reilly *et al.*, 2015). It has been a century since Part XIII of the Treaty of Versailles, which created the International Labour Organization (ILO), first asserted the importance of this equal value principle (International Labour Office, 1923). Victory in this battle remains elusive, although many researchers have identified drivers of the gender pay gap (GPG). Some of the explanations include the differences in human capital (Becker, 1962; Mincer and Polachek, 1974; Olson, 2013), employee 'choices' about part-time work (Hakim, 1996, 2006; Crompton and Harris, 1998; Crompton and Lyonette, 2005), vertical and horizontal occupational segregation (Tam, 1997; Blackwell, 2003; Dex, Ward and Joshi, 2008; Perales, 2013), the unequal division of household labour (England, 2000, 2005; Budig and England, 2001), and discrimination (Bolitzer and Godtland 2012; Healy and Ahamed 2019; Olsen and Walby 2004), particularly where differences cannot be explained by other factors through decomposition analysis (Blinder, 1973; Oaxaca, 1973). Of course, as even Oaxaca (1973) acknowledged, decomposition may underestimate discrimination when factors, such as occupation, may themselves be influenced by discrimination. Existing explanations for the GPG will be expanded upon in Chapter 2 and applied to the higher education (HE) sector context of this thesis in Chapter 4.

The need for a novel approach to explain the persistent GPG by interrogating accepted practices and settled social norms is long overdue. This thesis will explore pay secrecy and question the degree of transparency that pay transparency exercises deliver. Critical analysis will expose the silence of transparency—the pressure to shut down or at least isolate individual inequality concerns as anomalies because 'transparent' pay structures are in place. The focus will be on critically analysing the performance of the pay 'transparency agenda[2]' in UK HE and the sector's persistent GPG and gender/ethnic pay gap (G/EPG), based on fieldwork that was conducted primarily during the 2016/17 academic year. This thesis will examine the performance of the pay 'transparency agenda' inside two university case studies. These performances appear to be efforts to create organisational change. The analytical framework developed and applied in this thesis is built on Acker's (2006a,

[1] See Appendix A for a listing of acronyms and glossary of key terms of this thesis.

[2] The Noon Centre for Equality and Diversity in Business (2017) characterised this agenda as flowing from the Equality Act 2010, but I use the term more broadly, referring to the multi-layered forces that have pressured UK universities to improve pay transparency in the decade leading to 2016/17 (Chapter 4).

2006b) inequality regimes, which serve to illuminate interlocking practices and processes to conceptualise intersectional inequality inside organisations and explain why organisational change efforts to reduce inequality often fail. Change efforts, and resistance to such efforts, often make visible the invisible organisational functions that reproduce inequality (Acker, 2006b). Intersectional analysis of inequality in this thesis will be applied to gender and ethnicity, and the applicability of inequality regimes will be justified in Chapter 2.

As will emerge from this thesis, equality policy—whether legislative or organisational—may promise more than it delivers. As Hoque and Noon (2004) argue, an equality policy without appropriate supporting practices is an 'empty shell.' Transforming hierarchical power structures, which create unequal distributions of pay by gender and ethnicity within the workplace, requires more than words in statutes or organisational policies in PDF files. The initial failure of the UK's EPA 1970 to protect equal pay for work of equal value is a prominent example of the limitations of words to reform power inequality (Hastings, 2006; Davis, 2019).[3] Over the decade leading to 2016/17, multi-layered forces have created regulative and voluntary pressure on UK universities to become more transparent about pay and related progression policies and practices, in an effort to combat the persistent GPG.[4] These forces include:

- statute, such as the Public Sector Equality Duty (Brill, 2011);
- media, such as the Times Higher Education pay survey, which has published mean male and female academic salaries by institution annually, since at least 2007 (Fearn and Newman, 2007);

[3] The EPA became statute at the end of a Labour government (Seear, 1971, p. 312). The party affirmed the principle of equal pay for equal work in their 1964 election manifesto (Labour Party, 1964), as did the Trades Union Congress in a 1965 resolution calling on government to implement its own manifesto (Davis, 2019).[3] Momentum cooled, but was rejuvenated by the 1968 Dagenham Ford women machinists strike. Barbara Castle, then-Secretary of State for Employment, promised legislation. Concurrent negotiations for EU accession, completed in 1973, provided further pressure since pay equality had been part of the EU/European Community Treaty framework since the Treaty of Rome (McCrudden, 1983; Chalmers, Davies and Monti, 2010). However, the original EPA only protected equal pay for equal work. Implementation was also delayed until January 1976. This allowed job re-grading to circumvent the legislative intent to remedy unequal pay by creating post-hoc justifications for existing pay differentials between some jobs (Hastings, 2006; Davis, 2019). However, in Snoxell v Vauxhall Motors Ltd [1977] IRLR 123 EAT, women argued that they had been victims of unfair discrimination when their pay and grading was lowered, while men remained employed doing the same job at their old higher rates through a mechanism called red circling. The court dismissed red circling as a viable defence against the discrimination claim (Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, 2013).The European Court of Justice *Garland v British Rail Engineering Ltd (1983)* decision obliged the UK to protect equal pay for work of equal value from 1984 (Byrne, 1984; Szyszczak, 1985; Rubery, 2019).

[4] Emphasis on the G/EPG has grown since this fieldwork was conducted (Croxford, 2018, 2019).

- sectoral collective bargaining, which applies to the pay of most academics, except professors (JNCHES, 2004; NATFHE, 2005; University and College Union, 2016b);
- industry norms, such as the Athena SWAN charter (Equality Challenge Unit, 2018a); and
- the Employment Tribunal system, specifically the decision in the case of Professor EJ Shafer v Royal Holloway and Bedford New College in 2011, which identified the lack of transparency of professorial pay as an equality concern (Lewis, 2011).

Even the best laid anti-discrimination statute is only useful if employees have adequate information to observe pay disparity when it occurs and possess the power and resources to seek redress, including legal remedy where necessary (Lyons, 2012; Alexander, 2015). Indeed, inequality cannot be challenged if the pay 'transparency agenda' does not make individual pay disparity visible. Women cannot challenge pay discrimination or effectively advocate for their worth without knowing what others earn (Kim, 2015), particularly given the requirement under UK employment law to provide a real comparator in most pay discrimination claims (Gow and Middlemiss, 2012). An alternative mechanism through which women could learn about colleagues' pay is social pay comparison; this means discussing pay with co-workers (Burchell and Yagil, 1997). However, little remains known about the potential relationship between such pay discussions and wages (Colella *et al.*, 2007).

A pay disparity paradox complicates the study of the relationship between social pay discussions and wages. While pay inequality on the macro level is openly reported in official government statistics and the national media (Chapter 2), wage inequality that requires individual comparison is socially taboo (Fox, 2014). Discussion of individual level pay information, which might potentially reveal micro level disparity between colleagues, is often difficult and the information can feel like a closely guarded secret. Writing about this final taboo over what people earn, legal scholars suggest, at least in the American context, that secrecy preserves power:

> Although it is commonplace for sexual and family dysfunction to be discussed on afternoon television, most people still consider asking salary to be rude and intrusive. American competitiveness may then be the reason for the strength and longevity of the taboo. Information is power; the amount of money a person earns can be a measure of success, personal worth and even masculinity. Information about money is especially powerful and dangerous. (Levine and Stanchi, 2001, p. 551)

This macro/micro pay disparity paradox is surprising *because* of the recognised importance of income to individuals. In the global capitalist economy, money is the ticket to much else in life. This reality coloured Acker's (2006a) view that inequality regimes within organisations are typically

stable. The organisational processes that produce and reproduce inequality are stabilised partly by the 'wage dependence' that most people face, which is "the economic imperative that forces most people to work in order to survive" (Acker, 2006a, p. 129). In an interview with Hess (2019) on Equal Pay Day, economist Dr Heidi Hartmann observed that differences in pay "affect all your life chances, your children's life chances, your own health, your ability to take care of older parents." Furthering the perception that pay levels are important, universities prominently report their graduates' average pay to attract the next generation of scholars (University College London, 2017).

This paradox of condemning macro income inequality and mandating meso level GPG reporting, juxtaposed with the taboo over individuals discussing and sharing information about their incomes, characterises UK society. The headline GPG is widely reported at the macro labour force level. The UK's Office for National Statistics publishes the figure every year based on the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (Office for National Statistics, 2018b). Macro and meso level discussion of the GPG appeals to a communal sense of social justice. Calls to report and narrow the GPG at the meso level have emerged from the highest echelons of the UK government. Then-Prime Minister David Cameron declared, in an interview with Swinford (2015), that *finally* requiring large companies to report their gender and pay statistics would "cast sunlight on the discrepancies and create the pressure we need for change, driving women's wages up" to ultimately close the pay gap between men and women "within a generation." Although the 2015 Conservative government has been credited with promoting the pay 'transparency agenda' in the workplace to narrow the GPG, the Equality Act 2010 was one of the final achievements of the last Labour government (Hepple, 2010). Mandatory GPG reporting is at the centre of the current 'transparency agenda' (Noon Centre for Equality and Diversity in Business, 2017). However, this Tory-adopted 'agenda' has been met with scepticism that yet another policy promising equality, although a necessary step, is unlikely to deliver widespread changes. In reality, perfunctory pay transparency cannot redress embedded, structural workplace inequality (Women's Equality Party, 2017).

Woe betides the individual who seeks to discuss micro level inequality. Calling this taboo merely 'English' or 'British' culture evades critical analysis of why the taboo exists and its role in preserving gender and ethnic pay inequality. Jo Swinson, then-Minister for Women and Equalities, acknowledged this taboo in an interview with Pearlman (2013) when she encouraged women to ask their male counterparts about their earnings but recognised that "I think there's something very British in our culture where we don't talk about money, and I think that is one of the things that

holds women back." In Fox's (2014, p. 291) handbook of the 'hidden rules' of English society, the anthropologist calls this tendency the 'income-talk taboo.'

This thesis will highlight the need to critically analyse pay 'transparency agenda' performance and the income-talk taboo by examining the UK HE sector, which faced pressure from this same 'agenda' for more than a decade before recent GPG reporting regulations came into effect. The HE sector continues nevertheless to struggle with a persistent GPG, vertical segregation, and appallingly low representation of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals in the professoriate (McNabb and Wass, 1997; Blackaby and Frank, 2000; Blackaby, Booth and Frank, 2005; Bates, Jenkins and Pflaeger, 2012; New JNCHES, 2015; P. Miller, 2016; Grove, 2017b; University and College Union, 2017; AdvanceHE, 2018; Rollock, 2019) (Chapter 4). This raises the question, 'Why have previous efforts to create pay transparency in academia not eliminated pay inequality?'

Organisational policies—prompted by legislation—to promote equality through transparency have previously been probed, specifically in the UK university context. Ahmed (2012) astutely revealed the contrast between the stated aims and real outcomes of equality policies against racism in UK universities. She showed how universities at best create equality documents instead of doing equality work and at worst create equality documents that proactively obscure bad practices to manage reputations. Influenced by Ahmed, this thesis will critically analyse the relationship between pay 'transparency agenda' performance in two university case studies in the South East of England and the persistent GPG and G/EPG.

1.2 Justification for the Research

The focus in this thesis on the performance of the pay 'transparency agenda' in the UK HE sector is justified by empirical research gaps at the national and industry level and limitations of predominant methodological practice. At the national level, this thesis is justified empirically by the unexplored macro/meso versus micro level pay inequality paradox within UK society. This paradox contrasts with growing policy rhetoric that positions pay transparency as a valuable tool to combat the GPG. At the industry level, this thesis is justified empirically by literature on the persistent gender and ethnic inequality in UK academia, which lacks an examination of pay secrecy. This thesis fills a gap at the individual and organisational level by exploring the failure of the pay 'transparency agenda' to remedy this inequality. Predominant pay secrecy research has focused on employer actions and interests (Marasi and Bennett, 2016) (Chapter 3). Methodologically, this thesis is justified by providing a novel multi-layered, multi-strategy approach to such analysis in order to account for the employee perspective.

Empirically at the national level, the macro/micro pay inequality paradox means that headline statistics on national pay inequality are common in the UK, whilst a taboo hinders discussions of individual level pay. If the transparency of inequality from the macro or meso level headline government statistics or mandatory GPG reporting highlights a cause for concern, does the income-talk taboo silence individual inquiry and demands to reform the hierarchical power structures that are responsible for the inequality? This paradox is contextualised by the growing international and domestic policy rhetoric that encourages (meso) company level aggregate pay transparency as a tool to narrow the GPG. The UK's mandatory GPG reporting regulations came into force in the spring of 2017 and set a first reporting deadline by the spring of 2018. The regulations followed a number of European Union (EU) nations that had legislated to promote pay transparency by protecting employees' rights to discuss their pay (Bierman and Gely, 2004; Colella *et al.*, 2007; Doherty, 2011) or by mandating that employers report company GPGs. The 2006 Act on Equal Pay Between Women and Men required French companies to report their progress and plans to improve firm level gender equality (European Commission, 2014b, p. 19). A 2006 amendment to Denmark's Equal Pay Act required employers of 35 or more employees (including at least 10 male and 10 female staff) to provide annual reports of gender-disaggregated wage statistics to their employees or to provide clear descriptions of wage-setting practices and an action plan to achieve equal pay (Bennedsen *et al.*, 2018). The 2009 Discrimination Act required Swedish employers of 25 or more employees to conduct pay surveys every three years in order to identify unfair pay practices and to help create equal pay action plans (European Commission, 2014b). This Act was amended to mandate written pay audits from January 2017 (Veldman and Timmer, 2017). Since 2012, Belgium has required companies to annually report on their gender wage differences, including a detailed gender wage analysis for companies that employ 50 or more people. If gaps are revealed, companies must create improvement plans. Austria's National Action Plan has required companies with 150 or more employees to publish equal pay reports since 2014 (European Commission, 2014b).

In 2014, the European Commission (2014a) issued the *Commission Recommendation on strengthening the principle of equal pay between men and women through transparency*, encouraging EU member states to adopt a variety of measures to promote pay transparency as one of the tactics needed to reduce the GPG. The Recommendation encouraged the implementation of pay transparency along four core dimensions, including (i) the right of individual employees to request information about pay disaggregated by gender and work of equal value; (ii) an employer duty to report the average pay of men and women by job categorisation; (iii) an employer duty to conduct equal pay audits; and (iv) the inclusion of equal pay considerations, including equal pay

audits, in collective bargaining. Analysis conducted for the European Commission found that by September 2016, pay transparency reforms were not widespread across the EU (Veldman and Timmer, 2017). The Recommendation left the door open for an EU directive to promote pay transparency in member states through binding measures and enforcement. Public consultation on such a directive was held in early 2020, and the directive is expected to be adopted by the end of 2020 (European Commission, 2020).

In October 2010, the UK's Equality Act 2010, section 77 had also come into force. It prohibits employers from enforcing contractual clauses that ban employees from discussing wages if employees suspect illegal discrimination. Pay secrecy clauses were not banned, nor did the protection necessarily weaken the income-talk taboo. Section 77 only protects those willing to contravene the taboo and keeps the burden for achieving transparency on the employee, who must somehow realise that they *should* suspect discrimination and convince their colleagues (or former colleagues) to candidly share income details with them (Doherty, 2011). In April 2014, the government intensified this employee burden by abolishing the statutory Equal Pay Questionnaire, which had given employees the right to seek information about male comparator pay from their employers directly (Trades Union Congress, 2015b; Wild, 2017).

Section 77 assumes an openness that may not exist, partly due to the taboo, and assumes knowledge of employment law by rank-and-file employees. The text has also been criticised for its complexity, as it only protects those who share information to determine whether there is pay discrimination. It may be difficult for employers to know the motivations of pay disclosures, whilst employees may not understand the nuance of legal protection available in the face of clear gagging clauses that may appear in their employment contract (Gow and Middlemiss, 2012). A representative UK-wide survey by gender equality campaign group, the Fawcett Society, suggests that public awareness of employment law detail is weak. The 2018 study revealed that 60% of workers did not know about this protection, while 31% believed they were contractually banned from discussing their pay (Fawcett Society, 2018). Thus, the statutory language has limitations. However, van den Brink et al. (2010, p. 1462) argue that "the articulation of a norm in a policy plan is as much a practice as the application of that norm." Asserting the right to discuss wages in policy is a positive step—potentially better than no policy—although the direct impact on gender equality may be small. Legislation "may have a symbolic impact and constitute a driving force for gender equality standards" (Rubery and Koukiadaki, 2016, p. ix).

Pay transparency legislation is driven by a belief that pay transparency narrows the GPG. The argument that 'sunlight is the best disinfectant' suggests that if employers know that pay is transparent then they will be encouraged to make fair remuneration decisions (Eisenberg, 2011; Lyons, 2012). If employees have a more accurate picture of what their co-workers earn, especially potential comparators, they will learn of discrepancies if or when they do occur. Without knowledge of potentially unfair discrepancies, employees cannot seek remedy, such as by raising the issue with their line manager, bringing a claim against their employer, or seeking a new employer (Lyons, 2012). At best, employees may rely on haphazard access to pay information based on social networks or accidental discovery (Ramachandran, 2012).

This thesis is motivated by the case of the American Lilly Ledbetter, which illustrates the equality risks of perfunctory pay transparency. The US does not have federal legislation to require meso level transparency by private employers reporting their GPG. However, the National Labor Relations Act of 1935 bans pay secrecy clauses for some employees (Bierman and Gely, 2004; Colella *et al.*, 2007). Yet, awareness of this is low, the legislation does not apply to those with supervisory duties, and courts have frequently used loopholes to protect employers. For successful claims, the potential remedy is too weak to deter most employers as no damages may be awarded, and employees may only receive limited back pay, re-instatement, or an abolition of the discussion ban (National Women's Law Center, 2012; Kulow, 2013).

Ledbetter worked for Goodyear Tire and Rubber, as the sole female supervisor in her division, for 19 years. Her employer forbade employees from discussing pay, but in a supervisory role, the federal ban on pay secrecy clauses did not protect her. She only learned of the discrepancies that led to her discrimination claim after someone anonymously left salary information on her desk (Kim, 2015). Partly due to the veil of secrecy over Goodyear pay, whether she experienced illegal discrimination was never settled, despite her case reaching the Supreme Court in 2007. The majority opinion argued that Ledbetter's case lacked standing because the alleged discrimination originated with a pay decision that was made years before she brought her complaint, which was well beyond the 180-day statute of limitations. The decision led to the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act 2009, which statutorily restored the previously longstanding legal interpretation that each new payslip following a discriminatory action is a new discriminatory act and restarts the clock (Lyons, 2012; Kulow, 2013; Kim, 2015).

The Supreme Court's re-interpretation was out of step with how employment discrimination emerges, which is a process that snowballs subtly over time, in no small part due to the cloak of

secrecy hanging over pay. Ledbetter might never have learned of the discrimination she experienced but for the anonymous informant. The Supreme Court's 2007 majority opinion would have made it nearly impossible for American women to learn of their discrimination in time to bring pay discrimination claims due to employers banning or discouraging pay discussion, which are further reinforced by the income-talk taboo (Levine and Stanchi, 2001; Lyons, 2012; Kulow, 2013; Fox, 2014; Kim, 2015). The formal explanation for this snowballing phenomenon is the "cumulative effect of individual acts", a phrase from Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's dissenting opinion (Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co., Inc. 2007: 2180). This concept is reinforced by the "accumulation of disadvantage" phenomenon, which illustrates the impact of low starting salaries on women's lifetime earnings (Babcock and Laschever 2009: 131), and the widening GPG during the first decade of their working lives (Manning and Swaffield, 2008).

Under the Ledbetter Act, American women are theoretically more able to seek justice upon discovery of illegal discrimination. However, the law only deals with the consequences of secretive workplaces and does nothing to motivate employers to become more open about wages, as mandatory gender pay gap reporting legislation purports to do. Given the clear need to shift the pay knowledge-power asymmetry between employers and employees within the context of individual-rights based anti-discrimination legal regimes (Dickens, 2000), it is important to explore whether 'pay transparency' performance actually achieves this.

The empirical justification for this thesis's focus on the UK's HE industry stems from the research gap to be explored in Chapter 4. UK academia has a widely acknowledged problem with gender inequality in pay and related career progression. Knights and Richards (2003, pp. 217–218) observed more than 15 years ago "that the GPG is widening in academia, in contrast to the situation in the wider labour market." The GPG in academia has remained a recognised problem. The University and College Union's (UCU) national pay claim for 2016/17 contained a demand for nationally-agreed action by institutions to close the GPG by 2020 (University and College Union, 2016a). As awareness of the ethnic pay gap and intersectional G/EPG in academia is also on the rise, the UCU has been pushing for better data to address this problem. As such, the UCU 2015/16 national pay and equality claim called on universities to conduct mandatory biennial equal pay audits, disaggregated by gender, race and disability status (University and College Union, 2015b). Yet, at the individual and organisational level, researchers have not questioned why the pay 'transparency agenda' has not worked in the sector.

Despite the growing body of literature critiquing the HE sector for a persistent GPG and increasingly the G/EPG, the experience of seeking—particularly as a woman, BAME or BAME woman academic—to advance one's pay and career in relation to the pay 'transparency agenda' performance is underexplored. Whilst pay gaps can be decomposed (Chapter 2) to help identify what factors account for their persistence, quantitative assessment can obscure organisational processes and societal norms that reinforce and reproduce structural inequality. Accepted controls for pay differentials within academia, such as productivity measured by publication quality and quantity (Ward, 2001), are themselves prone to bias (Miller and Mctavish, 2011; Schucan Bird, 2011; Knobloch-Westerwick and Glynn, 2013; Knobloch-Westerwick, Glynn and Huge, 2013; Maliniak, Powers and Walter, 2013; Smith *et al.*, 2015; Hengel, 2017). Publication statistics have become institutionally unquestioned metrics applied to academic promotion procedures (Caffrey *et al.*, 2016), and promotion unlocks access to higher pay.

Arguably, questioning such processes is difficult for academics, partly due to the multi-layered pressure on HE to perform the pay 'transparency agenda' (Chapter 4). Could this 'agenda' have solidified power hierarchies that preserve the inequality it was meant to reform? While the 'agenda' has created an opportunity to make inequalities visible to some degree, engagement by university senior management could strengthen inequalities' legitimacy. By indicating the problem is being resolved, it becomes easier to individualise the experiences of disadvantage and fail to challenge systems that preserve existing hierarchical power. Analysis of how this multi-layered 'transparency agenda' performance pressure is manifested and experienced by individual academics working inside universities—who are themselves influenced by the societal income-talk taboo but may also demonstrate agency by discussing pay in certain circumstances (Chapter 9)—is missing from UK HE scholarship. This thesis will seek to fill this gap by critically analysing the performance of the 'transparency agenda' within institutions from a multi-layered perspective, including interlinked reward and progression.

Finally, there is a methodological justification for the multi-layered, multi-strategy approach of this thesis (Chapter 5). Most existing pay secrecy research has focused on the formal and informal actions and motivations of employers (Chapter 3). This leaves a blind spot in terms of the employee experience of pay secrecy and the visibility of potential pay inequality. The focus of most research on pay secrecy suggests that the employer motivation to maximise profit and productivity is the main driver for pay secrecy/transparency. Existing research explores the direct impact of pay

secrecy/transparency on performance (Burroughs, 1982) or task-performance (Belogolovsky and Bamberger, 2014), or factors that indirectly impact worker performance, such as employee well-being (Perez-truglia, 2019), morale (Breza, Kaur and Shamdasani, 2018) or pay satisfaction (Lawler, 1965b, 1965a, 1995; Thompson and Pronsky, 1975; Futrell and Jenkins, 1978). Little consideration is given to the impact of pay secrecy on employees' financial well-being.[5]

Even Marasi and Bennett's (2016) call for broader research and understanding into pay secrecy at work advocates for investigating factors that remain predominantly aligned with employer motivations and concerns for the bottom line. This includes measuring "workplace deviance, organizational citizenship behaviors, organizational commitment, and perceived organizational support" (Marasi and Bennett, 2016, p. 50). This does not allow pay secrecy/transparency to be understood as a tool of managerial power. Rather, it positions the concept as something instrumental that employers choose to 'do' to employees in order to achieve their objectives, such as improving performance or creating happier workers who are believed to be better performers. By exploring and acknowledging the multi-layered actions by employers and employees, and the multi-layered pressures on universities, this unique methodological approach will allow for the creation of a more nuanced understanding of the role of pay secrecy/transparency inside organisations. This understanding will be conceptualised through the central theoretical contribution of this thesis - the OSE.

1.3 Research Questions

This thesis aims to explain the paradoxical position of the pay 'transparency agenda' in UK HE, highlighting its weaknesses despite the growing policy rhetoric that transparency is an effective tool to reduce pay inequality. Pressure to implement this 'agenda' stems from sources external to universities, including the state, media, sectoral collective bargaining, industry norms, and a key employment tribunal decision (Chapter 4). However, success of the 'agenda' depends on what happens inside the 'black box' (Acker, 1991; Clegg *et al.*, 2016) of university bureaucratic structures. In her GPG analysis of Swedish banks, Acker (1991) advocated for the importance of critically analysing every-day organisational practices that impact wage setting, beyond collective bargaining:

> Real wages are set by people in interaction with other people…I needed another way of looking at wage formation that could show how wages actually get produced and what processes result in concrete, dollars-and-cents (kronor) differences between women and

[5] Bennedsen et al.'s (2018) research on Denmark's 2006 GPG reporting regulation and Cullen and Perez-Truglia's (2018) organisational experimental survey about employee pay awareness are notable exceptions.

> men. Who does what, with what tools, and with what resources of power and control inside the black box of wage setting? This process is hidden in studies of the gender-based wage gap. (Acker, 1991, p. 392)

The primary research question of this thesis is 'Why hasn't the pay 'transparency agenda' closed the gender and gender-ethnic pay gap in UK higher education?' This research question is motivated by a research gap of organisational and individual level investigations into the performance of the pay ' transparency agenda' in academia, and my personal interest in pay equality and observations of secrecy shrouding pay even in otherwise progressive institutions (Chapter 5).

Drawing on a range of intersectional feminist conceptions of gender, ethnicity, and power at work (Crenshaw, 1991; Bradley, 1999; Acker, 2006b, 2006a; Ahmed, 2007, 2012; Cho, Crenshaw and McCall, 2013; Eddo-Lodge, 2018) and Layder's (1993, 1998, 2013) research mapping approach, this study will adopt a multi-layered, multi-strategy approach. Therefore, my sub-research questions include:

- To what effect has the pay 'transparency agenda' been performed in the two university case studies?
- Do academics in the two university case studies violate the 'income-talk' taboo, and if so, how might observed social pay comparison behaviour patterns be explained?
- How does the pay 'transparency agenda' within UK universities influence awareness of pay (and related progression) inequality by academics, particularly women and BAME academics?

1.4 Outline of Thesis

This thesis is organised into nine chapters as follows:

- Chapter One provides a general understanding of the research scope and aims, justification for the research focus, the research questions, and outlines the remaining chapters.

- Chapter Two is the first of the three-chapter literature review that progresses from broad theoretical concepts to this thesis's specific research context. This chapter presents the theorised relationship between workplace organisational processes and the persistent GPG and G/EPG (bases of inequality), through the lens of Acker's (2006a, 2006b) inequality regimes. Acker's (2006a, 2006b) analytical framework provides the foundation for explaining inequality in the workplace with respect to gender and ethnicity. This idea is reinforced by exploring the limitations of relying solely on the quantitative reporting of the headline

gender pay gap, decomposing the gap, and analysing the intersection of ethnicity and gender in the pay gap. Inequality regimes provide a useful tool to add nuance to the positivist quantitative focus on bases of inequality.

- Chapter Three synthesises the existing knowledge of multi-layered sources of influence on pay secrecy/transparency in the workplace: government statute, trade union collective bargaining, employer policies, broad social norms, and employee behaviour. This chapter proposes how to draw these often-siloed forces together to theoretically underpin the analytical framework developed throughout this thesis, namely the organisational salary environment (OSE). The OSE is a three-pronged concept accounting for the forces that influence employees' awareness of pay inside organisations. The literature related to inequality regimes and pay communication/secrecy is drawn on in this chapter to begin the construction of this novel analytical framework. This approach enables a critical analysis of how multi-layered pressures may variably and concurrently make pay more or less secretive/transparent from the perspective of employees.

- Chapter Four describes and analyses the sectoral level HE context in which this thesis is situated. This chapter applies the labour economics and sociological literatures on the GPG and G/EPG, and the awareness of multiple levels of influence on the OSE, to the UK HE sector. This chapter first demonstrates the persistence of the GPG and G/EPG in UK academia, which is partially explained by vertical segregation in the academic hierarchy, horizontal segregation across disciplines, and the motherhood pay penalty. Secondly, key sources of influence on universities to perform the pay 'transparency agenda' are identified. These include the state, the media, sectoral collective bargaining, industry norms, and the employment tribunal system. This chapter illustrates the context of the thesis within UK HE and identifies a significant research gap this thesis seeks to fill, which is the understanding of how multi-layered pay 'transparency agenda' performance pressure manifests and is experienced by individual academics working inside universities.

- Chapter Five presents this thesis's multi-layered, multi-strategy research design (Tables 5-2 and 5-3) and explains the methodological perspective. This includes my reflexivity as a researcher and research philosophy, highlighting the influence of intersectional feminism and the critical realist approach used by Layder (1993, 2006, 2013). The methods selected to implement this research and the data used for analysis are described. This includes

secondary analysis of the GPG in HE and the two case study institutions; a binomial logistic regression using primary survey data on social pay comparison behaviour by academics, and thematic analysis of interview data and associated policy documents from the two case study institutions.

- Chapter Six applies a critical lens to formal 'pay transparency' performance through pay-related policies and external recognition-seeking in the case study universities, which impact the employer 'pay communication' policy component of OSE. This analysis engages with the visibility and legitimacy components of Acker's (2006a, 2006b) inequality regimes framework. Despite some remuneration and related policy differences between the two institutions, striking similarities emerge. Although both institutions provide similar commitments to producing regular equality and diversity data, concerns about the extent to which visibility is achieved emerge. This remains true for heads of department, despite their access to radical pay transparency of those working under them. Radical pay transparency refers to the revelation of actual individual pay levels. Additionally, both universities held Athena SWAN awards that seemingly legitimated existing arrangements, while academics and the union representatives alike expressed substantial concern that the legitimacy was superficial. This chapter contributes to an understanding of the 'pay transparency' paradox.

- Chapter Seven focuses on the employee behaviour (social comparison of pay) component of the OSE to achieve analysis at the level of situated activity. This analysis engages with the visibility of inequality component of Acker's (2006a, 2006b) inequality regimes. This chapter records and analyses patterns of pay discussion within specific real-world organisational contexts: two HE institutional case studies. For the first time, this analysis provides a window into hidden pay discussions by UK academics that occur despite the income-talk taboo. Strikingly, being a professor is the most important predictor of discussing pay, while neither gender nor ethnicity is significant.

- Chapter Eight focuses first on the informal pay secrecy norms that are reinforced through indirect and internalised managerial control behaviours and the 'helpfulness trap' of the 'Kafkaesque' citizenship expectations (Clegg *et al.*, 2016) that are placed on women, BAME academics, and BAME women. 'Kafkaesque' is a literary metaphor used to refer to the feeling of academics that they are "trapped in a vicious circle created by bureaucratic rules

that they can neither understand nor escape" (Clegg *et al.*, 2016, p. 158). These forms of managerial control have a mutually constitutive relationship with the income-talk taboo component of the OSE. This chapter also demonstrates experiences of bureaucratic reward processes and policies in the context of recruitment pay, promotion pay, and professorial banding decisions. Inconsistencies experienced with these processes stimulate the employee social pay comparison behaviour (and other social interactions) component of OSE, which generate opportunities to experience pay transparency, but complaints raised on the basis of such transparency do not yield systemic reform. Therefore, this analysis engages with the management control and compliance and the processes producing organisational inequality components of Acker's (2006a, 2006b) inequality regimes framework to further critical assessments of 'pay transparency' performance and strengthen the demonstration of the 'pay transparency' paradox.

- Chapter Nine concludes this thesis by drawing together the findings of the empirical chapters in relation to the primary and three sub-research questions and the thesis's contributions. The primary theoretical contribution of this thesis is the development of the OSE concept, with three mutually constitutive components, and the demonstration of its value for analysing the employee experience of pay secrecy/transparency inside organisations. The primary empirical contribution is the analytical demonstration and explanation of the 'pay transparency' paradox inside two case study universities. The primary methodological contribution is to demonstrate the value of a multi-layered, multi-strategy approach to explaining the persistence of pay inequality despite performance of the pay 'transparency agenda.' This chapter will also address research limitations, relevant developments since the 2016/17 fieldwork of this thesis, policy implications and potential impact of this thesis, and recommendations for future oresearch.

Chapter 2 Gender and Gender/Ethnic Pay Gap Inequality

2.1 Introduction

This is the first of the three-part literature review in this thesis. This chapter aims to establish the theorised relationship between workplace organisational processes and the persistent gender pay gap (GPG) and gender/ethnic pay gap (G/EPG), reflecting an understanding of gender and ethnicity as bases of inequality (Acker, 2006a, 2006b). To achieve this aim, this chapter will illustrate how intersectional analytical frameworks founded on Acker's (2006a, 2006b) inequality regimes can explain persistent workplace inequality. It will present the theoretical connection between pay secrecy and pay inequality and explain how the inequality regime framework applies to this thesis. Moving beyond a purely positivist quantitative focus is necessary to better explain how and why workplace disadvantage persists. The deceptive complexities of reporting the headline GPG will be critically reviewed and decomposition analysis, the statistical procedure that is commonly used to identify factors behind the GPG, will be explained. This chapter will also explore measurement of the more complex—although increasingly studied—intersectional G/EPG.

2.2 Acker's Inequality Regimes and Pay Secrecy

This section presents Acker's (2006a, 2006b) inequality regimes as a useful foundation for an analytical framework to help explain persistent gender and ethnic pay inequality. The challenge of accounting for all factors that may 'explain' pay inequality, is made harder to unpack by the societal pressures that themselves influence some of the ostensibly legitimate factors on which to base remuneration. Therefore, this section will demonstrate the theoretical link between pay secrecy and the GPG and then detail the value of Acker's inequality regimes as an analytical framework foundation to help understand that relationship

2.2.1 Proposing Pay Secrecy as a Factor to Explain the Gender Pay Gap

This section will explain the theoretical link between pay secrecy and the GPG and will then articulate the expectation that employer or legislative actions to reduce pay secrecy, by increasing pay transparency, are useful tools to narrow the GPG. Empirical conclusions are mixed, but promising. Pay secrecy/transparency literature refers to a range of actions, including pay transparency/secrecy led by employer policies, such as 'gagging clauses' in contracts to prevent people from talking about pay or reporting on the company's GPG. Other actions may be led by legislation, including prohibiting the enforcement of 'gagging clauses,' mandating GPG reporting at the company level, or requiring the publication of individual level salaries.

Recognising the difficulty of measuring pay secrecy in existing datasets, the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) conducted a novel US survey with a measure of pay secrecy based on employee reporting of employers' formal and informal pay secrecy policies. They found that in the public sector, respondents were more likely to report that 'wage and salary information is public' relative to the private sector. Private sector respondents were much more likely to report that discussing pay was informally discouraged or even formally prohibited at work. The IWPR noted a higher GPG in the more secretive private sector, observing that "while there may be no direct link between pay secrecy and pay inequality, pay secrecy appears to contribute to the GPG in earnings" (Hegewisch and Williams, 2014).

The argument for employer-led pay transparency to narrow the GPG has been made by women and labour rights advocates in the US and the UK (Trades Union Congress, 2013; Hegewisch and Williams, 2014; Hill, 2015), highlighting these public and private sector differences. Referring to the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2012, the TUC found that in the UK the private full-time GPG was 19.9%, while the public sector full-time gap was only 13.6% (Trades Union Congress, 2013). A report by the United States Office of Personnel Management (2014) found that female white-collar federal workers experienced a nearly 13% gap, while the American Association of University Women (AAUW) noted that American women overall experienced nearly double—a 22% gap (Hill, 2015, p. 19). However, other factors, such as the relative strength of the profit motive in the private sector or generally better oversight within government departments, may also explain these differences.

Legal and economic scholars have argued that moving towards employer-led pay transparency, which may or may not be mandated or encouraged by legislation, helps to narrow the GPG (Ramachandran, 2012; Kulow, 2013; Kim, 2015).[6] However, the field leans heavily on the US

[6] The impact of pay transparency has also been studied in the context of city managers and CEOs, but with a focus on high pay, not the GPG. The UK's High Pay Centre analyses the ratio between median FTSE 100 CEOs and median full-time employees. CEO pay was 144 times that of median employees in 2015. These reports complement calls for government to require CEO pay transparency (J. Miller, 2016). UK regulations came into force in 2019 to require publicly listed UK companies with 250 or more employees to annually publish their CEO to worker pay ratio from 2020, using median, 25th, and 75th percentiles (Gov.UK, 2019). Mas (2014, 2016, 2017) examined the impact of public sector pay transparency on city manager salaries in the American state of California, following legislation that mandated public disclosure. He found wage compression at the high end of the pay distribution and suggested that this was the result of a populist backlash against perceived excessive pay, not restraint of salaries that were above market value. The unintended consequence was that higher-qualified city managers were leaving because they could earn more elsewhere. Others have suggested that a similar unintended consequence occurs in the private sector when trying to balance public perceptions of American CEO pay with performance reward (Jensen and Murphy, 1990; Kaplan, 2013). Pay transparency

experience. Furthermore, in contrast to Kim (2015), Burn and Kettler (2019) found limited evidence that pay secrecy bans in US states had much impact on the GPG. Recent research in the Canadian higher education (HE) sector found that public sector salary disclosure laws have had a narrowing impact on the GPG amongst university faculty (Baker *et al.*, 2019). However, these studies do not fully explore multi-layered sources of pay secrecy in organisations, such as the role of the income-talk taboo or employee agency to discuss and share pay information with colleagues.

Kulow (2013) advocates for increasing employer-led pay transparency through legislation mandating employers to disclose individual level wages, alongside relevant employee demographics, in order to raise women's' awareness of how their pay compares to others' pay. She suggests that this necessary measure should be acceptable, given the prevalence of wage disclosure in the public sector, which is also consistent with the growing culture of openness triggered by the pervasiveness of social media (Kulow, 2013). However, her recommendations are based on her assessment of the legislative history relating to US gender-based employment discrimination, and the fact that gender differences in key pay factors, such as education and training; seniority; occupational segregation; and attainment of high paying jobs, cannot fully explain the continued GPG. She noted that while the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act gives women more time to become aware of their discrimination, it does not help them to become more aware. Kulow (2013) refers to other studies that demonstrate that mandatory wage disclosure laws in Minnesota and regulations of the US federal government have narrowed the GPG, but does not explain the methodology behind these findings. Kulow's (2013) argument, while consistent with the underpinnings of this thesis, stems largely from analysing previous research at a macro level, and is almost entirely US-based.

Ramachandran (2012) proposes making employer-led pay transparency an affirmative defence against employment discrimination claims under US law. This would not make transparency mandatory, as Kulow (2013) advocated, but would encourage companies to become transparent in order to pre-emptively block discrimination claims. This would arguably reduce intended and unintended pay discrimination. In a review of empirical literature, Ramachandran (2012) indicates that such employer-led pay transparency would help to narrow the GPG. Positioning unionisation and collective bargaining as evidence of pay transparency, Ramachandran (2012) points to research suggesting that where unionisation rates are higher, there is often less discrimination. These findings were similar for race-based discrimination in the US manufacturing sector (Agesa and

has implications for the broader pay distribution, particularly between workers of similar jobs. Mas (2017) highlights the need for further research into the impact of pay transparency on the GPG.

Agesa, 2008) and for gender-based discrimination in the same sector, particularly in male-dominated workplaces (Elvira and Sapporta, 2001). This suggests that pay transparency could help to reduce women's exclusion from beneficial social networks (Ramachandran 2012), although, due to the income-talk taboo, protecting the right to discuss pay may not be sufficient to overcome pay inequality, particularly where it results from occupational segregation.

Kim (2015) provides an economic analysis that suggests that legislation to protect the right to discuss pay is helping to narrow the GPG in some US states. At least eleven states had passed some form of a prohibition on wage secrecy by 2015. These laws prohibit employers from punishing their employees for discussing their pay but do not require employers to proactively report anything about pay. These laws generally cover private sector employees but also public sector employees in some states. Using a difference-in-difference human capital wage regression of a gender-balanced sample of about 2.1 million employees from the Current Population Survey, Kim (2015) finds that women's wages increased, most noticeably for college educated women. The GPG also narrowed in states with pay transparency legislation, relative to states without it (Kim, 2015). Conversely, Burn and Kettler (2019) find that legislation that bans pay secrecy has no net significant impact on the GPG, using a more limited sample of full-time managers. However, when analysing the data by sex, company size, and whether earning above or below the median wage, they find heterogeneity; the laws led to increased pay for some managers and decreases for others, particularly in the states with more recent legislation.

Using a different understanding of pay transparency, Bennedsen et al. (2018) find that mandatory publication of GPG reports in Denmark has narrowed the GPG with no net negative impact on profits, predominantly due to slow male wage growth. Baker et al. (2019) explore the impact of laws that require individual salary disclosure for academics earning above certain thresholds in public universities of several Canadian provinces. Their analysis finds that these radical transparency statutes have narrowed the GPG by 2.2-2.4 percentage points (about 30%), although this was achieved mainly by slowing the growth of male salaries and only marginally increasing the growth of female salaries. They also show that these impacts were strongest within unionised institutions.

This illustrates some inconsistency in the research findings that 'pay transparency' is a useful tool to combat the GPG, but it also demonstrates how different findings are linked to different interpretations of transparency and what multi-layered forces are involved in its creation, such as social norms, legislation, employers, trades unions, and employees themselves. Burn and Kettler's (2019) finding that protecting the right to discuss pay does not result in a net reduction of the GPG,

reinforces Kulow's (2013) critique that the Lilly Ledbetter Act only gives American women more time to become aware of pay discrimination but does not help them become more aware. Both highlight the often-missing component of pay secrecy/transparency discussions in relation to the GPG, namely the income-talk taboo. While legislative and employer policies are important, the individual agency of employees to conform to the societal income-talk taboo or not is also an important part of the conversation. Cullen and Perez-Truglia's (2018) study based on an organisational experimental survey in a large private-sector US company, suggests that policies to protect the right to discuss pay are of limited value in narrowing the GPG because of social privacy norms and the income-talk taboo, which they find affect men and women similarly. A comprehensive critical analysis of the performance of the pay 'transparency agenda' inside organisations requires accounting for multi-layered influences.

2.2.2 Inequality Regimes as Analytical Framework Foundation

Ackers' (2006b, 2006a) inequality regimes provides a foundation on which to build the analytical framework for this thesis's multi-layered approach. Inequality regimes have helped to explain puzzling inequality in public organisations, where inequality remains despite features expected to reduce inequality (Healy, Bradley and Forson, 2011). Acker (1991, 2006c) used gender regimes—a precursor concept to inequality regimes—to highlight linkages between secretive pay environments and a lack of institutional processes to collectively discuss pay inside highly-unionised Swedish banks. Acker (1990) details five interconnected processes through which organisations may be gendered. These include gender-based divisions; symbols strengthening divisions; women and men's engagement with the same and opposite sex; gendered workplace identities; and gendered organisational social structures, which contrast with traditional views that bureaucratic organisational logics are gender-neutral (Acker, 1990, 2012). The homogenous perception of pay secrecy as "something very British in our culture" (Pearlman 2013) provides an opportunity to illuminate Acker's (1990, 2006b) assertion that workplace processes cannot be separated from gender, race, and class power dynamics. Belief in the gender neutrality of organisational processes is common but often false (Acker, 1990):

> As a relational phenomenon, gender is difficult to see when only the masculine is present. Since men in organizations take their behavior and perspectives to represent the human, organizational structures and processes are theorized as gender neutral. When it is acknowledged that women and men are affected differently by organizations, it is argued that gendered attitudes and behavior are brought into (and contaminate) essentially gender-neutral structures. This view of organizations separates structures from the people in them. (Acker, 1990, p. 142)

Appreciating gender as an embedded organisational process is difficult. Acker (1990) argued that feminists identify organisational hierarchy as male-dominated, but fail to critically analyse the gendered nature permeating throughout organisational hierarchy. Writing that institutional explanations for the GPG place emphasis on labour market regulation, O'Reilly et al. (2015, p. 304) state:

> These approaches have been associated with dual labour market and segmentation theory where exclusionary practices have been reinforced by trade unions protecting insiders' status and reinforcing labour market segmentation (Rubery, 1978); although unions have also contributed to more inclusive practices that involve reducing the gender pay gap.[7]

Peruzzi (2015) observes that social partners sometimes involuntarily reproduce inequality through job evaluation exercises associated with collective bargaining. In her ground-breaking work, *Doing Comparable Worth,* Acker (1989) illustrates gender-embeddedness throughout the hierarchical pay structures by illustrating the problems that women face working in the public sector for the US state of Oregon. The sector underwent a comparable worth restructuring during the 1980s, which was intended to enshrine the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, between men and women. However, neither unionisation nor a technical approach to pay, initially assured the protection of women. There was political resistance to the proposed changes to job value ratings that were perceived to harm men (jobs dominated by men) or reduce the class boundaries between management and workers. There was also a reluctance to reward skills that were prominent in female-dominated jobs, such as human relations skills. Although ultimately the exercise was partly successful for the women, the analysis revealed that technical reforms to wage setting are not immune to the political components of wage setting (Acker, 1989; Parcel, 1990). However, as Guillaume (2015) and Deakin et al. (2015) note, specifically in the British context, unions have clearly generated more inclusive policies and practices that have helped to narrow the GPG, for instance by providing equal pay litigation support in employment tribunals. Unions have also been instrumental in campaigning for and negotiating equal pay clauses in collective bargaining agreements and pushing for equality audits (Healy and Ahamed, 2019).

Acker (2006b, 2006a) advanced from gender regimes to inequality regimes, which particularly encompass gender, class, and race-based inequalities. Reminiscent of 'gendered' organisations, she conceptualises intersectional organisational inequality as:

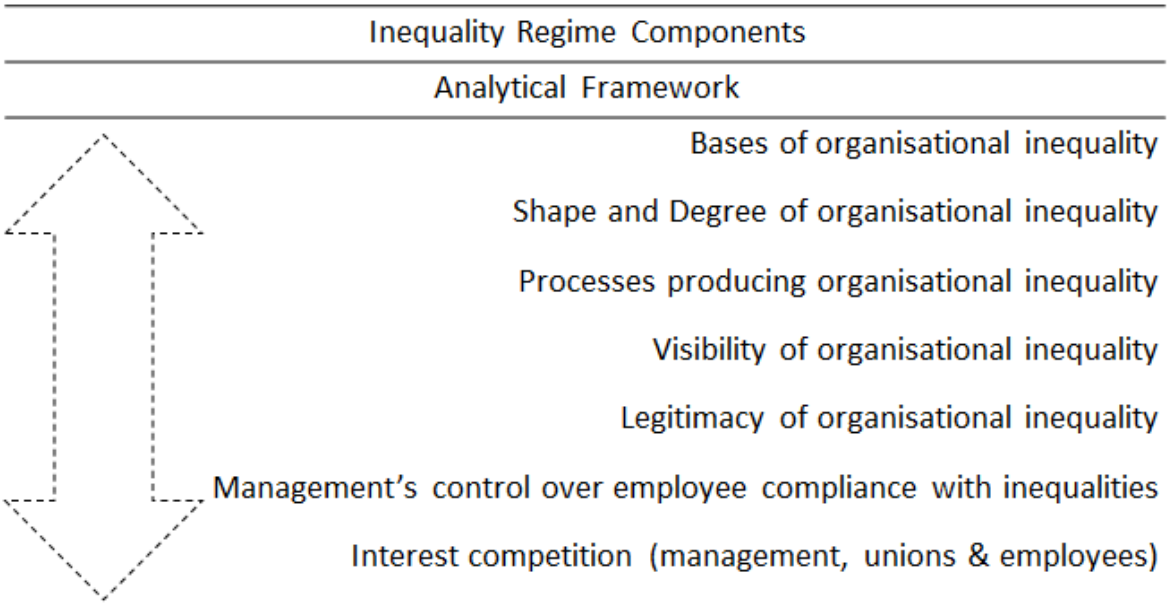
> systematic disparities between participants in power and control over goals, resources, and outcomes; workplace decisions such as how to organize work; opportunities for promotion

[7] See also (Deakin *et al.*, 2015; Guillaume, 2015)

> and interesting work, security in employment and benefits, pay and other monetary rewards, respect; and pleasures in work and work relations. (Acker, 2006b, p. 443)

Acker's (2006b, p. 441) framework helps to "conceptualize intersectionality, the mutual reproduction of class, gender, and racial relations of inequality, and…identify barriers to creating equality in work organizations" through seven components.

Figure 2-1: Acker's Inequality Regimes: Foundation of Thesis Analytical Framework



Source: (Acker, 2006b, 2006a)

Figure 2-1 illustrates the inequality regime framework, in which each component is of analytical importance. In practise, these components are interlinked, as indicated by the dual-sided arrow. This concept will be built upon in the remaining two literature review chapters to further construct the analytical framework of this thesis. The first inequality regime component refers to the bases on which inequality is embedded into organisational structures. This thesis focuses on gender and ethnicity. The second component addresses the shape and degree of inequality within organisations, which can be illustrated by power imbalances and wage data that is disaggregated by gender and ethnicity. Acker (2006b) notes that unions may not always lessen inequalities, which suggests that the shape and degree of the pay transparency that unions promote may be relevant to pay secrecy analysis. The third component addresses processes producing organisational inequality. The way work is organised, recruitment is completed, and wages are set are of most relevance to pay secrecy (Acker 2006b). Reminiscent of Acker's (1990) gendered organisations, this component considers how systems reproduce intersectional inequality. The fourth and fifth components examine the visibility of organisational inequality and its legitimacy, which refers to the extent to

which organisations justify gender, race or class inequalities on unrelated grounds. The sixth component encompasses management's control over employee compliance with inequalities. Control may be direct, indirect, or internalised (Acker 2006b). Pay secrecy obscures visibility of wage inequality, while management cues and societal pressures may legitimise that secrecy. Lastly, Acker (2006a) includes interest competition between management, unions, and employees, noting that structural inequality challenges may arise externally. The UK policy context, which included impending gender pay gap reporting regulations, presented a looming challenge to the organisational environments analysed in this thesis. Acker (2006a, p. 129) is pessimistic about the potential for long-term change, given the "gendered and racialized substructures of organizing" and "wage dependence, the economic imperative that forces most people to work in order to survive."

A critical approach is important to better understand the efforts to perform the pay 'transparency agenda.' The UK's mandatory GPG reporting requirement can be understood as a necessary but insufficient means of reducing the GPG. In relation to occupational segregation (Perales, 2013; Kirton and Greene, 2016), even if companies were required to publish usefully disaggregated gender wage data, arguably, most employees would have neither the time nor the skills to produce complex comparisons to reveal a systemic underpayment of feminised labour (Perales, 2013). Furthermore, company level reporting cannot create a full picture of occupational segregation since it only examines one company at a time, although occupational segregation may still appear inside a large organisation. Inequality regimes could help to critically assess employer explanations provided for aggregate GPGs under the UK's new mandatory reporting requirements. For instance, in the first round of reporting in 2018, Queen Mary University of London suggested that their mean GPG of nearly 22% was accounted for by what is essentially gendered vertical and horizontal segregation inside the organisation (Perales, 2013; Kirton and Greene, 2016). The narrative stated:

> Queen Mary acknowledges that its mean pay gap is high. Initial investigation has identified the following areas which possibly influence this figure.
>
> - High hourly rates of a small number of external experts, who are male and employed to lecture at the time of the data capture.
> - A higher proportion of males in senior, higher salaried roles in certain academic areas like Science and Engineering
> - Services such as cleaning and catering being run in-house in Queen Mary. These services have a number of roles on lower grades and are occupied predominantly by female staff. (Queen Mary University of London, 2018, p. 2)

From the perspective of Acker's (2006b, 2006a) inequality regimes, this document can be read as a means of legitimising inequality, and it suggests that work is being done to narrow the aggregate

GPG. This narrative provides a rational explanation for the problem; it indicates that the aggregate figure is not explained by illegal discrimination between men and women doing the same work or work of equal value. Even when inequality is revealed, often through macro level statistics, the problem has remained intractable. For instance, social partners in several European countries[8] have been reluctant to re-negotiate pay grading of female-dominated jobs even where unequal pay for work of equal value has been clearly shown (Rubery, Grimshaw and Figueiredo, 2005). That the document discusses the female-dominated cleaning workforces, reinforces the perception of feminised labour being low-paid without particularly challenging the notion. Whilst quantitative analysis tells part of the story of pay inequality, qualitative analysis founded on inequality regimes helps to make visible invisible forces, motivations and structures that allow its persistence.

2.3 The Headline Gender Pay Gap

This section will explore why quantitative methods, which emphasise bases of inequality, such as gender and ethnicity, are insufficient to explain the reproduction of workplace disadvantage. Notably, the headline GPG (raw, unadjusted, or aggregate GPG (Ward, 2001; Whitehouse, 2001; Chzhen and Mumford, 2011; Rubery, 2015)) is a simple description of gender-based pay differences in the workforce. It parsimoniously describes the average difference between what men and women earn at work. It is commonly written as a percentage gap. If women earned an average of £79 per period and men earned an average of £100 per period, the GPG would be 21%, meaning women earned 21% less than men on average. This is calculated as [(100-79)/100] (Leaker, 2008). This concept can also be presented as the gender pay ratio, which is the average female earnings per period divided by the same for men. Using the illustrative pay figures from the previous example, the gender pay ratio would be 79%, meaning that on average, women earn 79 pence for every pound earned by men, calculated as 79/100 (Grimshaw, 2000).

Headline GPGs alone do not evidence gender-based pay discrimination, which under UK law originated with the Equal Pay Act 1970, now updated to the Equality Act 2010 (Chapter 1). Illegal discrimination refers to “unequal pay for equal work (unequal remuneration in the same job) and unequal pay for work of equal value (low valuation of jobs that women do)” (Karamessini and Ioakimoglou, 2007, p. 34). An employer has committed an equal pay violation, only when this occurs within the same organisation. An aggregate GPG does not necessarily mean there is an equal pay violation because the pay differential may be partly caused by “differences in human capital and job

[8] Finnish social partners, the German metal workers union, and Austria’s Union of Salaried Employees were discussed (Rubery, Grimshaw and Figueiredo, 2005).

characteristics" (Mankiw, 2004, pp. 421–422). Human capital refers to "the accumulation of investments in people" (Mankiw, 2004, pp. 412–413), which includes things like educational qualifications, in-work training, and experience or tenure that are thought to make workers more productive and thus merit higher pay. Job characteristics, such as working conditions and level of responsibility, are also argued to justify pay differentials that compensate employees for work judged to be less pleasant or more difficult. However, the validity of these often subjective assessments can be difficult to objectively measure (Mankiw, 2004).

The apparent simplicity of the headline GPG also belies the deceptive complexities that may be used to minimise the appearance of a problem or prioritise focus on certain aspects of it, motivated by political objectives (Peruzzi, 2015). Given the range of 'headline' figures attainable using the same dataset and time period shown in Table 2-1, it is important to understand what alterations to measurements are commonly used, what impact those alterations have on the gap size reported, and what motivates the use of different measurements by different actors (Blau and Kahn, 2003). The headline GPG must also be interpreted in context, considering the economic, institutional, and cultural environment of the workforce it describes. On the national level, for instance, there is a negative GPG in Bahrain; women's average earnings outstrip men's (Chubb *et al.*, 2008). This does not indicate a female employment paradise. "Rather, this exception is explained by the relatively few women who enter paid employment in the country, and those that do are well educated and from upper socio-economic backgrounds" (New JNCHES Equality Working Group, 2011, p. 11). The same need to understand context applies at the workplace level, where a small or negative GPG could obscure a generally male-dominated workplace with only a few highly paid women.

2.3.1 Official Government Statistics

Multiple factors guide how the headline figure may be reported and interpreted, including national convention and understanding of what the GPG indicates about employment inequality. Differences in reporting practices, labour market trends, and pay structures make comparison over time and across countries challenging, particularly without harmonised datasets (Rubery, 1992; Blau and Kahn, 2003). Reporting the GPG based on hourly wages, arguably provides a closer measure of unequal reward for similar effort than reporting based on weekly or annual wages if women and men work significantly different hours. However, if part of the discrimination that women experience stems from access to fewer working hours, then reporting the GPG using hourly wages obscures this inequality. Table 2-1 illustrates some alternative ways to report the UK's headline GPG

for full-time and all employees, using the ASHE 2016 revised dataset (Office for National Statistics, 2018a).[9]

Table 2-1: 2016 UK Gender Pay Gap Using a Diverse Array of Calculation Methods

			Median Gender pay gap	Mean Gender pay gap
Hourly	Hourly pay gross	Full Time Employees	9.9%	14.0%
		All Employees	18.7%	17.5%
	Hourly pay excluding overtime	Full Time Employees	9.4%	14.1%
		All Employees	18.2%	17.5%
Weekly	Weekly pay gross	Full Time Employees	16.8%	19.6%
		All Employees	34.2%	34.3%
	Weekly pay excluding overtime	Full Time Employees	13.8%	18.0%
		All Employees	31.7%	33.2%
	Basic pay weekly - including other pay	Full Time Employees	13.6%	17.4%
		All Employees	31.1%	32.7%
	Overtime pay weekly	Full Time Employees	45.2%	68.2%
		All Employees	51.4%	67.6%
Annually	Annual pay gross	Full Time Employees	18.7%	23.4%
		All Employees	36.7%	37.9%
	Annual pay incentive	Full Time Employees	20.6%	60.2%
		All Employees	45.6%	71.2%

Source: Author's analysis of AHSE 2016 (Revised) (Office for National Statistics, 2018a)

The UK convention is to report the GPG using hourly earnings, while the US convention has been to use annual earnings. In their headline figure, the UK's Office for National Statistics (ONS) uses median hourly wages for full-time employees, excluding overtime, which obscures the differences in hours worked and bonuses received between men and women. By following this method, the GPG in the UK was 9.4% in 2016 (Myck and Paull, 2001; Smith, 2017), which yields the narrowest gap, minimising the appearance of a problem. Similarly, the European Commission also reports their 'unadjusted' GPG based upon the "average gross hourly earnings of male and female employees" (European Commission, 2014b, p. 3). However, the European Commission acknowledges that "using hourly pay as a basis for calculating the GPG can also mask specific differences in pay that go unrecorded, for example, bonus payments, performance-related pay or seasonal payments" (European Commission, 2014b, p. 3). Peruzzi (2015) heavily criticised the EU's political decision to rely on any unadjusted GPG because it ignores compositional factors for the gap, which are relevant for understanding what obstacles may be preventing women from fully enjoying the equal pay principles that the EU is supposed to protect. Article 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU and Directive 2006/54/EC "require a comparison between men and women undertaking 'the same

[9] Relevant figures for part-timers would show the part-time pay penalty, not the gap between male and female part-time employees (Manning and Petrongolo, 2008; Trades Union Congress, 2015a).

work' or 'work of equal value'" (Peruzzi 2015: 449). Such criticisms could be levelled at any aggregate reporting practice, but arguably, the official US practice of using annual wages could better represent the actual gap in earnings between men and women, at least for those working full-time. The US government's headline GPG comes from the United States Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and uses median gross annual earnings of year-round, full-time workers. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics report on this data revealed that women earned 80.5% of men salaries in 2016, so the GPG was 19.5% (Hegewisch and Williams-Baron, 2017). The most comparable figure for the UK in 2016 using Table 2-1 was 18.7%.[10]

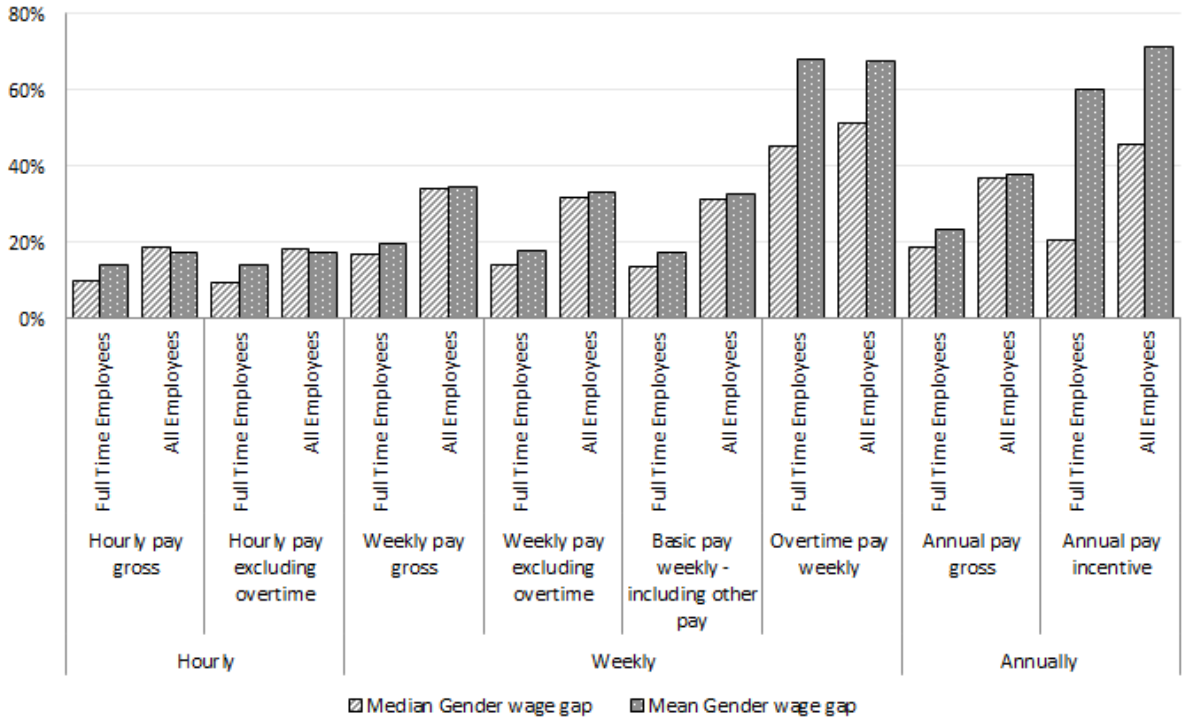
2.3.2. Advocacy Reporting Practice

Despite the variation between using hourly or annual wages, the government figures that have been previously discussed were all based on median wages. Using median wages means that high and low outliers do not skew analysis (Government Equalities Office, 2015). However, the Trades Union Congress (TUC), which represents a collective of UK unions, typically also reports a mean GPG using hourly pay, excluding overtime (Trades Union Congress, 2015a). As shown in Table 2-1, that figure was 14.1% in 2016. This is higher than the comparable median gap, indicating that outlier high earning jobs are male-dominated. Further complicating this issue, leading UK women's rights advocates, the Fawcett Society (2014), chose to emphasise the median gross hourly GPG for *all employees*, while all statistics previously referenced have referred only to full-time workers.[11] Table 2-1 shows the figure by this method was 18.7% in 2016.

Figure 2-2 illustrates the wide variation of reportable gaps, which depends on whether the mean or median has been used, whether the analysis is limited to full-time or all employees, whether the analysis uses hourly, weekly, or annual wages, and which components of pay are included.

[10] ASHE annual data is not limited to those working year-round, whilst the US Census figures are.
[11] The ONS also reports this figure, but it is not their headline calculation (Smith, 2017).

Figure 2-2: 2016 UK Gender Pay Gap Using Multiple Calculation Methods



Source: Author's analysis 2016 ASHE (Revised) (Office for National Statistics, 2018a)

The gap for all mean measures of overtime pay and incentive pay exceeds all other gap figures. This calls into question the ONS' political choice to headline with a conservative figure that excludes these components. The headline ONS figure, by design, does not reflect the differences between men and women's working hours and bonus pay. Although they produce more detailed analyses (Office for National Statistics, 2018c), the headline figure attracts media coverage. This generates an important criticism of headline GPG methodology because working hours and bonuses are shown to account for considerable differences between men and women's earnings, possibly due to discrimination in the workplace and broader society (Crompton and Harris, 1998; Crompton and Lyonette, 2005; Bryson and Forth, 2006; Metcalf and Rolfe, 2009; Healy and Ahamed, 2019).

2.3.3 Academic Research Practice

Academic researchers also use a range of headline GPG calculation methods. A seemingly crucial distinction is the reference period for the wage measure. As mentioned, using hourly wages rather than annual, monthly, or even weekly earnings obscures the impact of men typically working more hours than women (Myck and Paull, 2001). Many prominent researchers use hourly wages. Blau and Kahn (2006, p. 47) approximated an unadjusted hourly GPG by using "full-time, nonfarm wage and salary workers aged 18-65 years." Blau and Kahn (2007, p. 2) have also reported the raw GPG in the US, using the "average hourly earnings of full-time workers." Olsen and Walby (2004) similarly

calculated a raw GPG for Great Britain using the mean hourly wages of full-time employees, including overtime. Diverging on the type of employees analysed, Rubery et al. (2005, p. 189) calculated an unadjusted GPG for EU member states that was based still on "average gross hourly earnings" but including full-time and part-time employees who were working over 16 hours per week only. While using hourly earnings is common, it is not an absolute. Weichselbaumer and Winter-Ebmer's (2005) meta-analysis of 788 GPG estimates from 263 articles published during the 1960s-1990s, found that about 60% did not conduct their analysis using hourly wages.

Another critical issue for comparative GPG analysis is the lack of completely harmonised wage data even within the same database (Rubery, 1992; Blau and Kahn, 2003). In an analysis of 22 countries, using the International Social Survey Programme, about half of the countries reported gross income and the others net. Most countries reported monthly or annual earnings, while only one reported weekly (Blau and Kahn, 2003). It is difficult to settle on a universally optimal earnings measurement for the headline GPG because as Lips (2013b, p. 226) observed, no single measure of hourly, weekly, or annual wages can adequately describe a vastly complicated wage structure, complete with "full-time and part-time workers, contingent workers, unionized and non-unionized workers, people who are paid a salary and people who are paid by the hour, people who receive bonuses and other compensation, etc."[12] The key issue here is to ensure that, whatever headline GPG measure is used, the implications of the selected measure are clearly explained and that the measure is calculable using a consistent and comparable method across the analysis (Lips, 2013a).

2.4 Gender Pay Gap Decomposition Analysis

Headline GPGs are often criticised by sceptics for comparing apples with oranges; they do not account for the many potentially legitimate reasons for differences in pay (Risher, 2015), such as the human capital of workers and the characteristics of jobs (Mankiw, 2004). Therefore, scholars have progressed beyond reporting variably calculated headline GPGs, to also trying to explain why those unadjusted gaps remain. Building from human capital theory, many scholars have placed explanatory factors into two broad categories: human capital and discrimination. The goal is to explain what proportions of the GPG can be attributed to them (Olsen and Walby, 2004; Bolitzer and Godtland, 2012). Although numerous advances have been made (Nielsen, 2000; Hettler, 2007; Moral-Arce *et al.*, 2012; Amado, Santos and São José, 2018), labour economists traditionally use the Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition method (Blinder, 1973; Oaxaca, 1973) to decompose the headline GPG using variables that are theorised to legitimately account for differences in pay. The

[12] See also (Olson 2013)

decomposition calculates what proportion of the GPG is explained by measurable differences between men and women, which are argued to legitimately impact pay, like human capital levels and job characteristics. Decomposition also demonstrates what proportion of the gap results from different returns to the same characteristics between men and women, such as the same level of education. The proportion of the gap left unexplained could be attributed to discrimination (Olsen and Walby, 2004; Bolitzer and Godtland, 2012).

2.4.1 Employee Characteristics: Human Capital Theory

Becker's (1962) human capital theory provides the foundation for partly attributing the GPG to divergent education, training and skills between men and women (Suter and Miller, 1973; Mincer and Polachek, 1974). The concept of human capital has been disaggregated into specific and generic skills. Specific skills are applicable in a given employment environment and tend to be accrued at least partly from training provided by the firm. Generic skills are transferable and relevant in several employment settings (Tam, 1997). However, there are critiques of this distinction. Perales' (2013) replication of Tam's work with a UK dataset found that, when controlling for specialised human capital, occupational feminisation of wages persists. This supports the understanding that 'women's work' is devalued through occupational segregation and female-dominated occupations tend to attract lower pay than male-dominated ones (England, 2000).

The concept of human capital has been further broken down by the origin of employees' skills. A distinction has been drawn between whether skills were obtained through formal education (Elliott, Dale and Egerton, 2001) or in-work training (Dearden, Reed and Reenan, 2006). In work-training has been further subdivided into on-the-job employer provided training courses, off-the-job employer provided training courses, and other work related training courses (Blundell, Dearden and Meghir, 1996). More recently, Sakellariou (2013) demonstrated that the origin of employees' cognitive skills, either school or non-school acquired—as opposed to simply measuring years of education—is partially responsible for the GPG. This drew on Ishikawa and Ryan's (2002) observation that the impact on wages of school-acquired and non-school acquired cognitive skills depends on race and gender.

Weichselbaumer and Winter-Ebmer's (2005) extensive meta-analysis of international GPG research revealed that, whilst the unadjusted GPG has shrunk considerably since the 1960s, the unexplained portion of the gap, commonly derived through Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition, has not. However, when different methods and data sources of the selected studies were taken into account, the resultant meta-regression analysis found a 0.17% annual decline in the unexplained portion of the

gap, representing small but measurable progress. Nevertheless, scholars continue to conjecture that labour market discrimination may be a factor behind the remaining unexplained portion of the GPG (Blau and Kahn, 2006).

As women have begun to persistently outpace men in HE, the human capital explanation for the GPG is appearing increasingly incomplete (Blau and Kahn, 2006; McDaniel, 2012; Olson, 2013). Lips (2013a, 2013b) appeals for alternative approaches to complement traditional decomposition analysis. Robust academic debate on this topic includes arguments that "the key reason to critique the human capital approach is just this: that a narrow focus on such an approach aids in the rationalization of discrimination against women by positing numerous logical "reasons" for their differential treatment and making people comfortable with the gap" (Lips, 2013a, p. 225). There are other methods of understanding the varied factors. For example, the Brown, Moon, and Zoloth (1980) method seeks to assess occupational segregation and unequal pay for equal work and generates decomposition using a Marxian and feminist analytical framework of wage determination (Karamessini and Ioakimoglou, 2007). The Brown-Moon-Zoloth method transcends the Oaxaca-Blinder's neo-classical wage setting assumptions that "wages are determined through individual transactions and the workings of market forces according to the marginal revenue product of labor" (Karamessini and Ioakimoglou, 2007, p. 32), by including modelling for the effect of occupation segregation on the GPG. However, their model can only detect the 'distribution effect' of occupational segregation, referring to "women's concentration in the lower-paid occupations and industries" and not the 'undervaluation effect', referring to "lower average wages in feminised occupations and industries" (Karamessini and Ioakimoglou, 2007, p. 46). By contrast, the Karamessini-Ioakimoglou method measures both, and takes as an analytical starting point the Marxian understanding that wages are set socially in relation to the power of labour, determined by "culture – such as social habits pertaining to reproduction – and the balance of power between labor and capital, depending on unemployment and institutions. The historical or social element of the value of labor power varies over space and time according to social habits and social conflict" (Karamessini and Ioakimoglou, 2007, p. 32).

2.4.2 Employee 'Choices': The Part-Time Pay Penalty, Horizontal and Vertical Segregation, and the Unequal Division of Household Labour

A unifying theme of the literature that seeks to explain the GPG is the awareness that the problem is complex; numerous factors beyond human capital have been theorised and tested to help better explain the GPG's persistence. As previously indicated, research has demonstrated the impact of occupational segregation and the appearance of a statistically significant penalty for engaging in so-

called ‘women’s work’ (Hegewisch *et al.*, 2010; Perales, 2013). Mumford and Smith (2007) add to this an important demonstration of the influence of workplace segregation on the British GPG.

Occupational segregation can be horizontal, in terms of the occupations where men and women work, and vertical, in terms of the hierarchical level of jobs held by men and women. Male-dominated occupations and positions at higher levels tend to be higher paid than female-dominated, lower level jobs (Kirton and Greene, 2016). Scholars also point to women’s overrepresentation in part-time work (Blackwell, 2001) and the part-time pay penalty (Fernández-Kranz and Rodríguez-Planas, 2011). Olsen and Walby (2004) demonstrated that not all human capital from work experience is equally rewarded. Not only was part-time experience not associated with higher wages (even considering years worked on a pro-rata basis), but every year of part-time work actually correlated with a slight decline in wages (Olsen and Walby, 2004). However, Blackwell (2003) did not find evidence of a clear worsening of this part-time disadvantage for ethnic minority women, which was due to the heterogeneous experience of different ethnic groups.

Linked to the higher concentration of women in part-time work, another prominent explanation for the persistence of the GPG is the unequal division of household labour between men and women, especially childcare (Donath, 2000). This is called the motherhood penalty.[13] Mothers face a salary slump (Waldfogel, 1998; Budig and England, 2001; England, 2005) and an occupational status trajectory penalty (Abendroth, Huffman and Treas, 2014), while fathers receive a boost (Hodges and Budig, 2010; Petersen, Penner and Høgsnes, 2014). However, this fatherhood bonus accrues primarily to certain men, namely white, married men who work in cognitively demanding roles (Hodges and Budig, 2010; Friedman, 2015). "The effect of becoming a father is another source of privilege for privileged men, but less so for men who are in at more socially disadvantaged positions. African Americans specifically seem to be excluded from claiming the wages of organizational hegemonic masculinity” (Hodges and Budig, 2010, p. 742). Hegemonic masculinity originated in Connell’s sociological works in the 1980s (Connell, 1982, 1983, 1987; Connell *et al.*, 1982; Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1985) and has been used to help understand the role of gender and power within organisations, which "requires the policing of men and exclusion or discrediting of women" (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 844). It is characterised by a picture of “the strong, technically competent, authoritative leader who is sexually potent and attractive, has a family, and has his emotions under control" (Acker, 1990, p. 153).

[13] However, research suggests that the impact of the motherhood penalty varies widely with income level, tending to hit the lowest earnings with the most intensity (Budig and Hodges, 2014).

Another strand of research argues that gendered employment and university degree choices explain much of the gap (Daymont and Andrisani, 1984).[14] If women 'chose' to behave like men, they would not experience workplace disadvantage. Thus, Sloane (1988) predicted that as gendered labour force participation rates continue to equalise, so will wages. Hakim's (1996, 2006) writing on gendered choices and gendered workplace attachment provides further critique of those who argue that the GPG is an outcome of institutional disadvantage. In her 'preference theory,' women can be disaggregated into a small grouping of home-centred women, who are deeply committed to their family and do not want to secure paid employment; a small grouping of work-centred women, a rare breed of mostly childless women who value their careers above family; and the largest grouping of adaptive women. Adaptive women want to work but not to the exclusion of family life. Hakim (2006) argues that women's economic outcomes are different to men's because most women are not fully committed to paid employment. Conversely, Hakim (2006) asserts that most men are work-centred, or primarily committed to paid employment. Acceptance of 'preference theory' could explain a lack of interest in discussing wages among women. If most women were not primarily committed to paid employment, it might seem strange to observe a keen interest in comparing their pay with others amongst most women. However, Hakim has come under significant critique for ignoring practical constraints, namely economic barriers, which influence women's paid work. The high cost of childcare in Britain encourages women to cluster into poorly remunerated part-time and female-dominated work (Crompton and Harris, 1998; Crompton and Lyonette, 2005). These constraints also pressure men to be breadwinners and restrict the time that they may prefer to spend at home caring for their children. These constraints on men have begun to be explored within the context of a universally toxic hegemonic masculinity, as mentioned previously when introducing the fatherhood bonus (Friedman, 2015).

2.4.3 Employee Attitudes: Gendered Pay Negotiation, Risk Aversion, and Competition

Recognising further complexity to the causes of the GPG, other scholars propose that gendered psychological traits are part of the explanation (Blau and Kahn, 2017). Babcock and Laschever (2009) suggest that women's persistent economic disadvantage stems partly from gendered workplace behaviours, coloured by women's passivity. Their experimental study found that women scored 45% lower than men on a scale that measured the respondent's belief that their circumstances could be improved, which is in line with earlier and often contested findings that men are more willing to negotiate their salaries than women. They conjectured that the continued unequal balance of power

[14] However, other research has since suggested that a continued GPG persists for same majors among those who had the same major just one year out of gradation (Corbett and Hill, 2012).

in favour of men in business and politics explains this 'rational' psychological reluctance of women to negotiate their worth in the workplace (Babcock and Laschever, 2009). While other studies have made similar arguments about women's relatively lower likelihood to negotiate and their tendency toward risk-aversion and away from competition (Croson and Gneezy, 2009; Bertrand, 2011; Blau and Kahn, 2017), these findings have tended to primarily be based on lab experiments. In a large-scale natural field experiment, Flory et al. (2015) suggested that women are averse to competitive work settings, relative to men, but caution that gender differences exhibited could reflect an aversion to uncertainty rather than competition. However, Leibbrandt and List's (2015) study demonstrated that simply stating that salary was 'negotiable' eliminated the gender difference in negotiation attempts by potential recruits. Croson and Gneezy (2009) also observed that there may be a publication bias. Studies that find a gender difference are more likely to be published than those that do not, although they attempted to counteract this by including unpublished works in their review. The suggestion that the GPG results from women's lack of negotiating prowess was exacerbated by Sandberg's (2013) *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*.

Despite the appearance of blaming women's workplace disadvantage on women's behaviour, some of these same scholars have also found that experimental data indicates that women's reluctance to negotiate pay is not borne of any innate deficiency but is based on gendered norms. When women and men negotiate similarly, women's efforts are received more negatively (Bowles, Babcock and Lai, 2007). Artz et al.'s (2016, 2018) research based on the Australian Workplace Relations Survey for 2013-2014 found that when controlling for hours worked, there is no statistically significant difference between men and women's pay negotiation frequency, although men were more likely than women to receive a pay rise when they asked. As Artz et al. (2016, p. 3) succinctly conclude, at least in Australia, "women do ask but do not get."

Furthermore, Manning and Saidi (2010) found that women's supposed dislike of competitive workplaces explained almost none of the actual GPG in the UK. They highlighted that previous studies reporting a gender-divide in the preference for competitive working environments had all been experimental, so they instead operationalised competitive tendencies in the real labour market by recording whether an individual's contract included performance-related pay or not. Blau and Kahn's (2017, p. 855) US-based research on the Michigan Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) microdata, found that psychological traits explained only a modest proportion of the gap, which was "considerably smaller than, say, occupation and industry effects." Similarly, Manning and

Swaffield (2008), using data on those who had been in the British workforce for ten years, found that gendered psychological traits had a very small impact on the GPG.

2.4.4 Missing: Pay Secrecy in Income Datasets

Although a limited argument could be constructed for incorporating pay secrecy into a human capital theory-based decomposition model, pay secrecy is complex and little data exists to measure it inside organisations. Some surveys have found more than one-third of private employers in the US openly admit to prohibiting pay discussion (Colella *et al.*, 2007). The first survey of workers asking about pay secrecy in their workplace was conducted for the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR). They found that about half of US workers reported that their employers imposed formal policies to prohibit or informally discourage talking about wages. However, they also revealed a minor gender distinction of women reporting higher rates of discouragement than men, and a sharp distinction between the public and private sectors. In the private sector, 62% of women and 60% of men reported employer prohibition or discouragement from discussing pay, whilst only 18% of women and 11% of men in the public sector did. The IWPR analysis suggests that this gender distinction in terms of employer-driven pay secrecy may worsen the GPG but does not analyse whether the gender differences were statistically significant (Hegewisch and Williams, 2014). Rosenfeld (2017) conducted peer-reviewed analysis of IWPR's data and found that while formal pay secrecy policies were more common in 'coercive bureaucracies' (i.e. non-unionised private-sector firms), informal discouragement was felt equally. Companies were also no more likely to discourage women, ethnic minority, or immigrant staff from discussing pay than their male, white, or non-immigrant counterparts. However, when silence obscures inequality, those experiencing the inequality would be disproportionately harmed. Weakening the income-talk taboo would require social change, specifically because "pay secrecy is perpetuated in most workplaces by a wide-spread social norm against discussion of salary, rather than a coercive legal rule forbidding such discussion" (Lyons, 2012, p. 364).

From a different perspective, Burchell and Yagil (1997) used the Social Change and Economic Life Initiative data on social pay comparison to reveal patterns of employee pay discussions, but they did not link this analysis strongly to gendered differences or income. Furthermore, the data came from one area of England in the late 1980s. From the perspective that knowledge is power in wage negotiation, employee power is weak relative to employers' power. Rosenfeld and Denice (2015) used the British Workforce Employment Relations Survey (WERS) to suggest that employee perceptions of managerial financial transparency impacted pay, where 'very good' financial transparency was associated with 8-12% higher pay compared to employees who perceived it as

'very poor.' However, whilst gender was a control in their models, they did not analyse whether this impact was different for men and women. Furthermore, characterisation of managerial 'financial transparency' in WERS is too broad for discussion of the pay 'transparency agenda' as it encompasses company finances, not just pay (or related progression) data. Consequently, novel data on academic social pay comparison behaviour will be generated and analysed in this thesis (Chapter 7).

2.5 Intersectional Analysis: The Gender/Ethnic Pay Gap

Much of the research underlying this chapter has predominantly focused on gender as a base of inequality. A growing number of studies are increasingly recognising pay disparities tied to ethnicity (or gender and ethnicity), particularly comparing Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals with white employees (O'Reilly *et al.*, 2015). Although not all ethnic divisions fare worse than white employees, in the British context, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and black Africans consistently fare worse in unemployment rates, occupational status and earnings when controlling for traditional individual human capital variables (Heath and McMahon, 1997; Berthoud, 2000; Blackaby *et al.*, 2002; Platt, 2005; Heath and Cheung, 2006; Longhi and Platt, 2008; Brynin and Güveli, 2012). Brynin and Güveli (2012) draw interesting parallels between the influence of occupational segregation on the GPG and the influence of segregation on the British ethnic pay gap. Societal maternal pressures placed on women that contextualise gender-based occupational segregation do not apply when considering ethnicity alone. However, Brynin and Güveli (2012) attributed the aggregate ethnic pay gap primarily to occupational segregation. As with feminised labour, the harm was far-reaching. "Working in an occupation with a relatively high level of ethnic minorities is nevertheless associated with a wage penalty. It should be noted that this effect occurs regardless of the worker's own ethnicity" (Brynin and Güveli, 2012, pp. 577–582).

Ethnic or race-based pay gaps are often absent from government pay analyses. Neither race nor ethnicity are measured in the ASHE dataset (Scruton, 2015), which is considered to be the most reliable measure of UK wage levels (Leaker, 2008). This deficiency also occurs on the organisational level. A recent survey of FTSE 100 HR and Diversity and Inclusion leaders revealed that 83% of respondents felt their company's data on ethnicity and race diversity needed improvement (Beech *et al.*, 2017). A PwC survey of 80 UK employers found that 95% had never analysed their ethnic pay gap; the majority (75%) had not even collected employee ethnicity data, with many citing data protection concerns and small sample sizes as the primary reason they had not done so (Bennett, 2019).

When BAME pay gaps are reported, they are often framed as exacerbating the GPG rather than being discussed in their own right. UK women's activists and unionists recognise Equal Pay Day in November, the month from when women are considered to be working for free for the remainder of the year (Kollewe, 2015). Americans observe a similar occasion but include additional days to reflect the larger disparity faced by women of colour, specifically Asian, African-American, Native American and Latina women (American Association of University Women, 2016). Robust quantitative analysis of this complex intersectional perspective on the experience of pay inequality is still in its early stages. Woodhams et al. (2015, p. 63) describe this as "the snowballing penalty effect", finding support for an intersectional rather than additive impact on pay penalties. The researchers considered sex, race, age, and disability using payroll data over several years from a single company, generating an N of more than half a million. "The results indicate, then, that for individuals with more than a single disadvantage, there is an intersectional effect on their pay. Like a snowball, it gathers weight exponentially as it descends" (Woodhams, Lupton and Cowling, 2015, p. 73). While this thesis does not aim to develop a comprehensive model to account for the GPG or the G/EPG, it will incorporate an analysis of the G/EPG within HE in order to demonstrate the persistence of inequality as a justification for studying pay transparency/secrecy experienced by UK academics (Chapter 4). [15]

2.6 Summary

This chapter has first demonstrated that an intersectional analytical framework based on Acker's (2006a, 2006b) inequality regimes is suited to explain workplace inequality and its relationship with complex pay secrecy/transparency. This was achieved by justifying the theoretical connection between pay secrecy and pay inequality and explaining the components of the inequality regime framework applied in this thesis. This chapter highlighted the value of moving beyond the positivist quantitative focus on bases of inequality (gender and ethnicity) by analysing the complex and value-laden considerations that go into headline GPG calculation. It also explored the arguments for developing decomposition analysis based on worker characteristics, 'choices', and attitudes and clarified the importance of moving beyond a gender silo, to consider the intersection of ethnicity-based pay discrimination.

[15] This will compare wages of BAME men and women and white women against white men. A within-BAME group analysis would be useful for understanding within-group differences but would not contribute to this thesis, as BAME respondents to my survey and especially interviews are too few to analyse separately and maintain anonymity.

This chapter emphasised the need to better explain the persistence of pay inequality, because of the frequent absence of a key factor from existing quantitative exercises to explain pay inequality, namely pay secrecy, which may be an invisible reinforcing mechanism of workplace pay inequality. Incorporating this concept into previous decomposition methodologies could be a partial response to the identified literature gap. However, no dataset with a variable suitable to measure this concept could be identified and statistical models still lack nuanced understanding of the hidden societal, organisational and interpersonal dynamics that shape the development of workplace pay discrimination, which this thesis will explore through critical analysis of the performance of the pay 'transparency agenda' in UK HE (Chapters 6 and 8).

The following two literature review chapters will help to further construct an analytical framework founded upon inequality regimes in order to analyse the relationship between pay secrecy and pay inequality. The theoretical contribution of this thesis will be the organisational salary environment (OSE) framework, which provides a new tool to conceptualised pay secrecy/transparency inside an organisation. Chapter 3 will draw on the pay communication literature to provide further theoretical derivation of this tool. Chapter 4 will provide the contextual understanding of gender and ethnic-based inequality in UK academia in order to provide guidance for operationalising the OSE inside the case study universities of this thesis.

Chapter 3 Organisational Salary Environment: Conceptualising Pay Secrecy/Transparency at Work

3.1 Introduction

This second part of the literature review chapter focuses on existing knowledge of the multi-layered sources of pressure on organisations to become more transparent about pay (and related progression) practices. These pressures range from macro social norms to individual pay discussion behaviour. At the level of the society, the typically taken-for-granted presentation of the income-talk taboo will be described to provide a rationale for critical inquiry into this force. The potential influence of government statute on organisational pay transparency, referencing the UK's mandatory gender pay gap (GPG) reporting regulations, will be examined. Employer 'pay communication' policy is the focus of most existing pay secrecy/transparency literature, and its influence on pay transparency will be explored. The expected influence of trade union collective bargaining to highlight remuneration-setting processes will be discussed. Lastly, individual pressure will be explored with reference to the extent to which employees are known to violate the income-talk taboo through social pay comparison.

This literature will be reflected upon to clarify the gap in pay secrecy/transparency studies that this thesis will fill; this chapter contributes to knowledge of these pressures by considering these factors in relation to each other in order to further derive the theoretical underpinning of this thesis's analytical framework, namely the organisational salary environment (OSE). The OSE is a novel tool to conceptualise the dynamics that influence employees' awareness of pay inside organisations. The implication of this conceptualisation for critical analysis is that dynamic factors variably make pay secretive or transparent. For instance, to describe pay in an organisation as 'transparent' because there is a collectively bargained pay scale, is inadequate if the organisation also has policies or informal practices that allow for deviation from that scale.

3.2 The Societal Income-Talk Taboo: A Tool to Maintain Hierarchical Power?

At the level of the society, the typically taken-for-granted presentation of the income-talk taboo will be described to provide a rationale for critical inquiry into this force. Social norms influence the organisations in which people operate. Where employees lack clear understanding of how their pay is determined, they could seek to confirm if they are being paid fairly by asking colleagues. However, a considerable societal barrier exists, the income-talk taboo (Fox, 2014). Given the importance of individual level pay knowledge to equal pay claims (Wild, 2017), this taboo merits inclusion in critical analysis of organisational pay conditions. However, current research into the problematic

implications of this taboo for gender and ethnicity-based pay inequality is limited. Economic justifications that rationalise the taboo from the employer and employees' perspective do not interrogate gender or ethnicity-based pay inequality. Legal scholars acknowledge the problematic nature of the income-talk taboo for pay inequality but nevertheless tend to accept the norm as homogenous. Most promisingly, Fox (2014) provides a anthropological case for understanding the income-talk taboo from a more sociological perspective: as a mechanism of reinforcing power inequality at work.

3.2.1 Income-Talk Taboo Respect by Employees and Employers: Economic Modelling

Economists have positioned the income-talk taboo in various ways as a rational calculation by employers and employees, rarely considering gender or ethnicity-based inequality implications. Bierman and Gely (2004) argue that the income-talk taboo makes good business sense from the employer's perspective. It avoids workplace conflict linked to jealousy, and it allows employers to reward employees who make 'firm-specific' investments in their human capital. Akerlof and Yellen (1990, p. 255) argue that workers comply with the taboo as a reaction to the fair-wage effort hypothesis, which is the idea that "workers proportionately withdraw effort as their actual wage falls short of their fair wage." The latter is determined with reference to co-workers' wages (Akerlof and Yellen, 1990). Since wages are seen by employees as a reflection of their effort, they may be reluctant to discuss pay and risk shame if they do not measure up.[16] These authors suggest homogenous behaviour by individuals, regardless of situational context, and make no attempt to gender the norm.

More recently, Lavie (2009) used economic modelling to explain why employees comply with the income-talk taboo.[17] He modelled this norm as an optimal compromise between binding conventions, where workers expect to remain working at set pay, and spot markets, where workers follow high wages. Binding conventions allow enough labour mobility for sufficient productive efficiency, while making employers agree to fixed wage contracts, which protects employees from aggregate wage shocks (Danziger and Eliakim, 1997). If the labour market is weakly competitive, the firm can 'afford' transparency and will not have to match many external offers. When labour market

[16] The characterisation of income-talk taboo as a protection from shame also has resonance within social psychology. Freud (1908) links money to anal eroticism, which Trachtman (1999, p. 279) notes "suggests that shame is a powerful motive for reticence in money matters." The money taboo's breadth may explain the dearth of research into it; potential researchers are not external to societal norms. Trachtman (1999, p. 283) defined money psychologically as "our projection onto coins, bills, bank accounts, and other financial instruments of our beliefs, hopes, and fears about how those things will affect who we are, what will happen to us, and how we will be treated by others or by ourselves."

[17] Lavie uses the terms wage taboo, salary taboo, and wage-secrecy norm (Lavie, 2009).

competitiveness is moderate, secrecy is imposed and workers comply, allowing the firm to match offers only for its best workers. When labour market competition is intense, companies raise all wages to pre-empt losing employees and match all external offers (Lavie and Robin, 2008; Lavie, 2009).

However, Lavie (2009) acknowledges that external offer matching models say little about internal firm relations and wage setting. He proffers another model that characterises the secrecy norm as "the result of continuous public behaviors and beliefs and [is] subject to constant negotiation and evolution over time. In the short run, however, agents experience the norm as an exogenous rule that is not subject to changes or policy discussions" (Lavie, 2008, p. 11). This model suggests that low-paid workers embrace the taboo to avoid feeling inadequate, while high-paid workers do so to protect salary increases from scrutiny. Additionally, firm owners support a stronger wage-secrecy norm, whilst employees and the self-employed support a weaker wage-secrecy norm (Lavie, 2008, 2009). A central conclusion of Lavie's wage-secrecy norm model, consistent with many worker advocates' conventional wisdom, was that "a strong secrecy norm increases inequality at the macro level" (Lavie, 2009, p. 38). However, he did not link that inequality concern to gender, ethnicity, or discrimination, referring instead to inequality between extreme high and low earners.

The modelling discussed was theoretical with no reference to fieldwork or data (Danziger and Eliakim, 1997; Lavie, 2008, 2009; Lavie and Robin, 2008). Foreshadowing the anthropological income-talk taboo, these models frame the norm as reinforcement of the hierarchical capitalist power of employers over employees. Lavie (2009) asserts that secrecy protects firm owners' high pay from scrutiny and increases macro-economic inequality. For the matching models (Danziger and Eliakim, 1997; Lavie and Robin, 2008; Lavie, 2009), employees give up potential upward wage volatility in exchange for decent contracts with guaranteed wages. Labour market competitiveness is seen to justify pay secrecy inside firms, which may in turn create a justification for discrimination based on market forces. Similar argumentation is used when labour market analysts assert that regulations to reduce gender bias will make it harder for women to obtain work (Elson, 1999). None of these models conjecture the potential interplay of sex or ethnicity with income-talk taboo compliance.

3.2.2 Legal Scholars Acknowledge a Homogenous Income-Talk Taboo

Legal scholars acknowledge the income-talk taboo, but seldom with significant empirical questioning of the function of the norm. This seems unusual, given the growing policy advocacy for more openness around pay as a tool to combat the GPG (Chapter 1) and raises questions about the

implications of this apparently powerful social norm for the preservation of the powerful and privileged at work. Legal scholars have demonstrated somewhat tacit acceptance of this taboo. Levine and Stanchi (2001, p. 551) led with a bold declaration that "one of the last American taboos" forbids salary conversations and that compliance by employees strengthens employer power. However, they only substantively analysed the systemic undervaluation experienced by legal writing professors (Levine and Stanchi, 2001), without demonstrating the implications of the taboo in that undervaluation. Others have gone further by actively arguing against prohibiting company bans on discussing pay, because it would create economic uncertainty, and asserting that pro-active state legislation in the US state of California to mandate 'pay openness' was ill-advised (Gely and Bierman, 2003; Bierman and Gely, 2004). Bierman and Gely (2004, p. 191) concluded that "the social norms favoring workplace pay secrecy/confidentiality make both practical and economic sense, and should not be disturbed."

In response, Edwards (2005, p. 42) urged researchers to "determine the extent to which the money-talk taboo manifests itself in various contexts, whether its effects are solely beneficial or harmful, and how, if at all, lawmakers should respond to these effects." Yet, the norm has still been uncritically assumed to be homogenous and omnipresent, if also problematic. When Estlund (2011) called for mandatory transparency at work, she explicitly excluded pay from her arguments. She noted that the topic would raise complex concerns for employers and should be researched separately. Answering this call and in contrast to Bierman and Gely (2004), Eisenberg (2011), argued that the legal protection of pay transparency was essential *for* economic stability. Yet, Eisenberg (2011, p. 989) simplistically noted that "even in the absence of pay secrecy policies, discussions about money-especially wages-are often considered crass or arrogant in the workplace." By contrast, Lyons (2012, p. 380) called for stronger statutory protections of wage discussions in the US to combat social norms that "discourage pay transparency and impose social sanctions on individuals who openly discuss their salary or ask about another's salary." However, her central argument that a mandatory wage disclosure law is needed to subvert social norms, whilst probable, still did not interrogate the assumed homogeneity of income-talk taboo adherence (Lyons, 2012). Kulow (2013) made a similar argument for legally protected pay transparency, with a brief acknowledgement of the income-talk taboo. In response to her own earlier paper, Estlund (2014, p. 786) also called for legal protection of pay transparency to reduce pay discrimination, whilst acknowledging that "employees are still impeded from discovering pay disparities by widespread pay secrecy norms."

3.2.3 The Anthropological Income-Talk Taboo: A Scaffold of Workplace Power

Most promisingly, anthropologists pose an understanding of the income-talk taboo from a more sociological perspective: as a mechanism of reinforcing power inequality at work. The mechanics of the income-talk taboo are superficially similar to other anthropological taboos, indicating something with which individuals are reluctant to engage (Walsh, 2002). However, the context that explains why the taboos are forbidden, by whom, when, and what happens when a taboo is violated is important. The anthropological taboo (Douglas, 1995; Barnes, 2000; Walsh, 2002) refers to something that is forbidden. Why should discussing ones' pay be forbidden?

Fox (2014, p. 291) refers to the 'income-talk taboo' as the strongest taboo within the broader English money-talk taboo. Recent research by a prominent gender equality campaign group, the Fawcett Society (2018), demonstrated this social norm through a nationally representative UK-wide online survey. Weighted by age, sex, and region, the study revealed that 47% of men and 53% of women feel awkward about revealing their pay to a co-worker. Yet, Fox advocates digging beyond a simplistic characterisation of this taboo as an established cultural value:

> The taboo is clearly related, in a 'grammatical' sort of way to the rules of privacy, modesty, and polite egalitarianism, but this is how anthropologists always try to explain the more outlandishly irrational beliefs or grotesque practices of the tribes and societies they study…It is important to understand why people do these things. But it doesn't make them any less daft. (Fox, 2014, p. 290)

Taboos exist within a responsibility system that preserves order and societal morality and may be enforced by representatives of the polity's central authority (Walsh, 2002). The social morality protected by Fox's (2014) income-talk taboo is capitalism. Taboo concepts are framed as something that threatens society's central organising principles (Douglas, 1995). The income-talk taboo's apparent societal function is frequently justified by concern for maintaining stability for the firm, such as by avoiding employee conflict, balancing employee and employer risk sharing, and rewarding employees for making human capital investments that are specific to a firm (Bierman and Gely, 2004).

Additionally, Walsh (2002) emphasises that anthropological taboos need not be universally respected, even within a village, to be considered a taboo. Drawing on Barnes' (2000, p. 8) societies as "systems of responsibilities", Walsh (2002) asserts taboos have no agency; individuals living under them have the "freedom to do otherwise" (Fischer and Ravizza, 1993, p. 6). Therefore, variations in taboo compliance within social structures or organisations would not negate the taboo. Thus, it is

necessary to answer Edwards (2005) call to develop a critical understanding of the function of the income-talk taboo and to better understand who observes the income-talk taboo (Chapter 7).

3.3 Government Statute: Encourages/Mandates Pay Transparency

Government statute can influence employers by placing regulative or voluntary pressure on employers to create varying degrees of pay transparency both within organisations and in public. Here, the influence of government statute on organisational pay transparency will be illustrated by the UK's mandatory GPG reporting regulations. While these regulations require employers to generate some degree of pay transparency, they have been criticised as watered down from equal pay audits (Trades Union Congress, 2015b). Implementation of these regulations was on the horizon when fieldwork was conducted for this thesis, prodding large employers to think more about their remuneration processes. Section 78 of the Equality Act 2010 authorised government to require companies with 250 or more employees to report their GPG publicly. However, the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government, which came to power shortly after Labour's Act passed, chose to delay this action and instead test launch a voluntary reporting scheme—Think, Act, Report—in September 2011 (Miller and Swinson, 2012).

Unsurprisingly, following a year of implementation, only 54 companies signed up to this voluntary scheme, representing a workforce in excess of one million (Miller and Swinson, 2012). The government maintained its conviction "that the voluntary, business-led approach which Think, Act, Report sets out is the best way to encourage employers to drive culture change, tackle the complex issue of equal pay and promote equal opportunities for everyone" (Miller and Swinson, 2012, p. 8). However, by the May 2015 general election, the Conservative Party revised their confidence in voluntarism. The Party's election manifesto committed to implement section 78, by proclaiming that "We want to see full, genuine gender equality. The gender pay gap is the lowest on record, but we want to reduce it further and will push business to do so" (Conservative Party, 2015, p. 19). The government launched a mandatory GPG reporting consultation. By February 2016, just 300 employers had even pledged to 'think,' and merely 7 had 'reported' their GPG (Government Equalities Office, 2016a). In February and March 2017, Parliament finally approved two regulations mandating all private, voluntary, and public employers with 250 or more employees to publish GPG reports. The regulation applicable to universities—The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017—came into force on 31 March 2017. This expansion of the Public Sector Equality Duty requires governing bodies of English universities to publish annual GPG details.

The first reports were due March 30, 2018, whilst private and voluntary employers were given until April 5, 2018 (HM Parliament, 2017a, 2017b).

However, the reporting criteria of these regulations impacts the influence that they could have on OSEs, and consequently the degree to which the GPG may narrow as a result. The minimum size of companies that must report[18], format of reporting, compliance enforcement mechanisms, and to whom companies must report their GPG statistics are all important considerations, which were identified by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) (2015b) and the Fawcett Society (Olchawski, 2015). The GPG regulations require the reporting of just six descriptive statistics, including the mean and median GPG based on all employee hourly pay, mean and median bonus GPG, proportion of men and women who receive a bonus, and proportion of men and women in each pay quartile (HM Parliament, 2017b, 2017a). The TUC's submission to the government consultation emphasised substantive differences in usefulness between GPG reporting and equal pay audits[19] (Trades Union Congress, 2015b). Distinct from government mandated aggregate GPG reporting, which generate headline figures (Chapter 2), an equal pay audit[20] "involves establishing where men and women are doing equal work including jobs that are different but of equal value, compares the pay of men and women doing equal work and takes action to narrow any gaps between individual men and women that cannot be justified by objective, non-discriminatory factors" (Trades Union Congress, 2015b, p. 18).

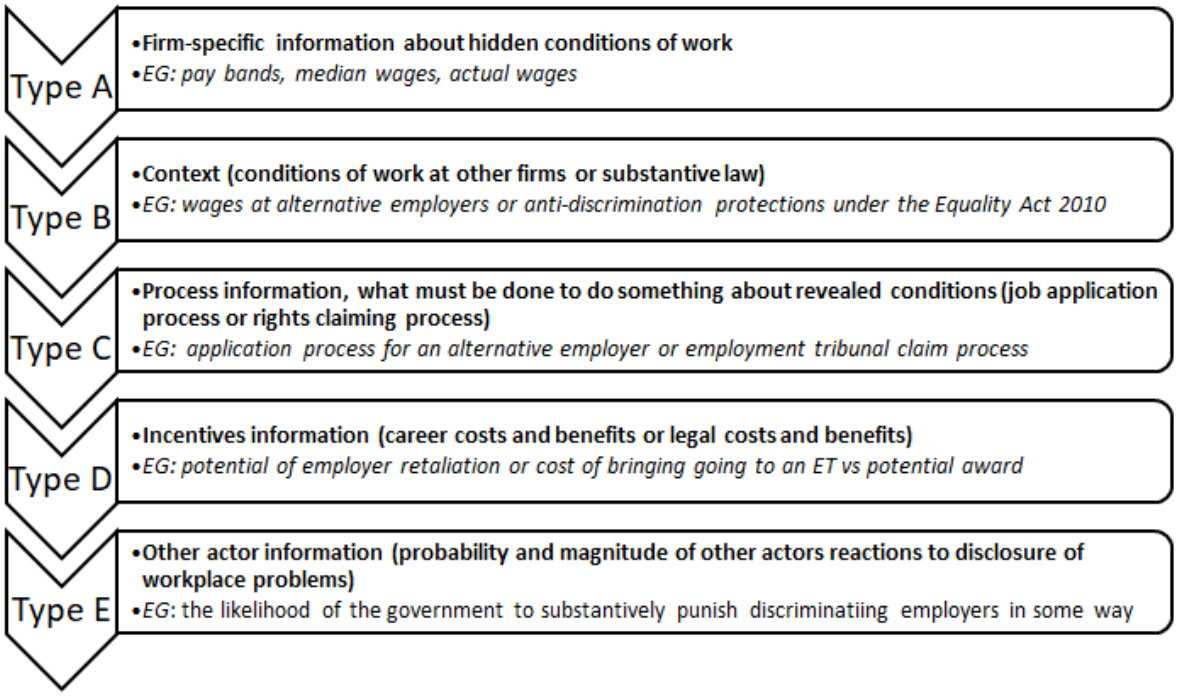
Alexander's (2015) typology of workplace information demonstrated the importance of this distinction. Alexander (2015, p. 215) argued that "revealing firm-specific information about the hidden conditions of work" would not necessarily transmit the information effectively to employees. Pay is a commonly hidden condition of work where information given to employees may not result in reform (Alexander, 2015). She conceptualised this argument through five-part typology of workplace information, which is presented in Figure 3-1.

[18] Even if all employers reported, this would not eliminate the headline GPG, which partly reflects labour marked-wide occupational segregation. Rubery (2015, p. 62) notes that "It would be perfectly possible to imagine a scenario where there are zero gender gaps within organisations but a high aggregate gender pay gap, with more women being concentrated in lower paying organisations than men."

[19] Companies that seek to avoid negative repercussions from an identified GPG might still adjust job classifications, as occurred during the Equal Pay Act 1970's implementation period, although like Vauxhall Motors, they may risk committing illegal discrimination (Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, 2013).

[20] The Equality and Human Rights Commission's (2011a) Equal Pay Code of Practice advises that equal pay audits must "compar[e] the pay of men and women doing equal work – ensuring that this considers work that is the same or broadly similar (like work), work rated as equivalent and work that can be shown to be of equal value or worth."

Figure 3-1: Alexander's Typology of Workplace Information Applied to Pay Transparency



Source: Author's pay transparency-relevant examples applied to (Alexander, 2015, pp. 189–193)

This typology explains worker, interest group, and regulator behaviour in response to revealed hidden information. Revelation of firm-specific Type A information alone cannot generate reform. Mandatory GPG reporting generates Type A information that cannot help individual workers understand whether their pay is lower than a relevant comparator, neither does it suggest whether discrimination may be present. Type B information can indicate discrimination. If a worker manages to obtain such information, they would not be able to respond with a legal claim, approach their employer for redress, quit, or find another job without adequate Type C process information and a belief that the risk is worth the legal cost, which is Type D information. Pay transparency is valuable if it provides enough information to reveal illegal discrimination, takes place within a framework of enforceable anti-discrimination policy, and there is sufficient public awareness of employment rights and an ability to claim justice. A critical understanding of the practical influence of government statute on employer 'pay communication' policy is both essential and requires nuance.

3.4 Employer 'Pay Communication' Policy: A Spectrum

Most of the extant pay secrecy/transparency literature focuses on employer 'pay communication' policy, which will be discussed here. Employer 'pay communication' policy covers all efforts by employers to provide and control information about how pay and related progression decisions in an organisation function and to what effect (Marasi and Bennett, 2016). Such policy can be

characterised as secretive or transparent. A company may act to comply with legislation that encourages or mandates employers to be transparent or it may follow industry-specific norms about transparency (Costas and Grey, 2014). However, much of the research that is relevant to this thesis, relates to what pay secrecy/transparency achieves from the perspective of employers. Lawler's (1965a) foundational pay secrecy research (and other work that followed) focused on interrogating the relationship between pay secrecy/transparency and worker satisfaction, motivation or effort (Lawler, 1965a, 1965b; Schuster and Colletti, 1973; Burroughs, 1982; Nosenzo, 2013), not the pay distribution or pay inequality (Colella *et al.*, 2007).

Schuster and Colletti (1973) found generally strong support for pay secrecy amongst professional employees within a single firm, although higher performers were more likely than lower performers to support employer-led pay secrecy. However, of the individual characteristics tested[21], only education was significantly correlated with such beliefs. Those with graduate degrees were more likely to support open pay, whereas those who held a bachelors or no degree tended to support pay secrecy. Although this interrogation of employee perspectives was done with consideration for employer interests, it still did not explore the relationship between pay secrecy and pay.

Leventhal et al.'s (1972) important early study suggested that moving from pay secrecy to pay transparency compresses the wage distribution. Participants awarded high performers lower reward and low performers less punishment in pay under conditions of transparency than under conditions of secrecy. However, this was an experimental study using college students, removed from an organisational context and employment non-discrimination legislation. Thus, the validity of these results in relation to real pay is uncertain. Suggesting that increasing pay transparency may be less costly or disruptive than significantly altering pay practices, Burroughs (1982, p. 45) noted that "compared with other pay-versus-performance issues, pay secrecy focuses on a single and simple dimension – that is, the range of employees' knowledge about the compensation structure."

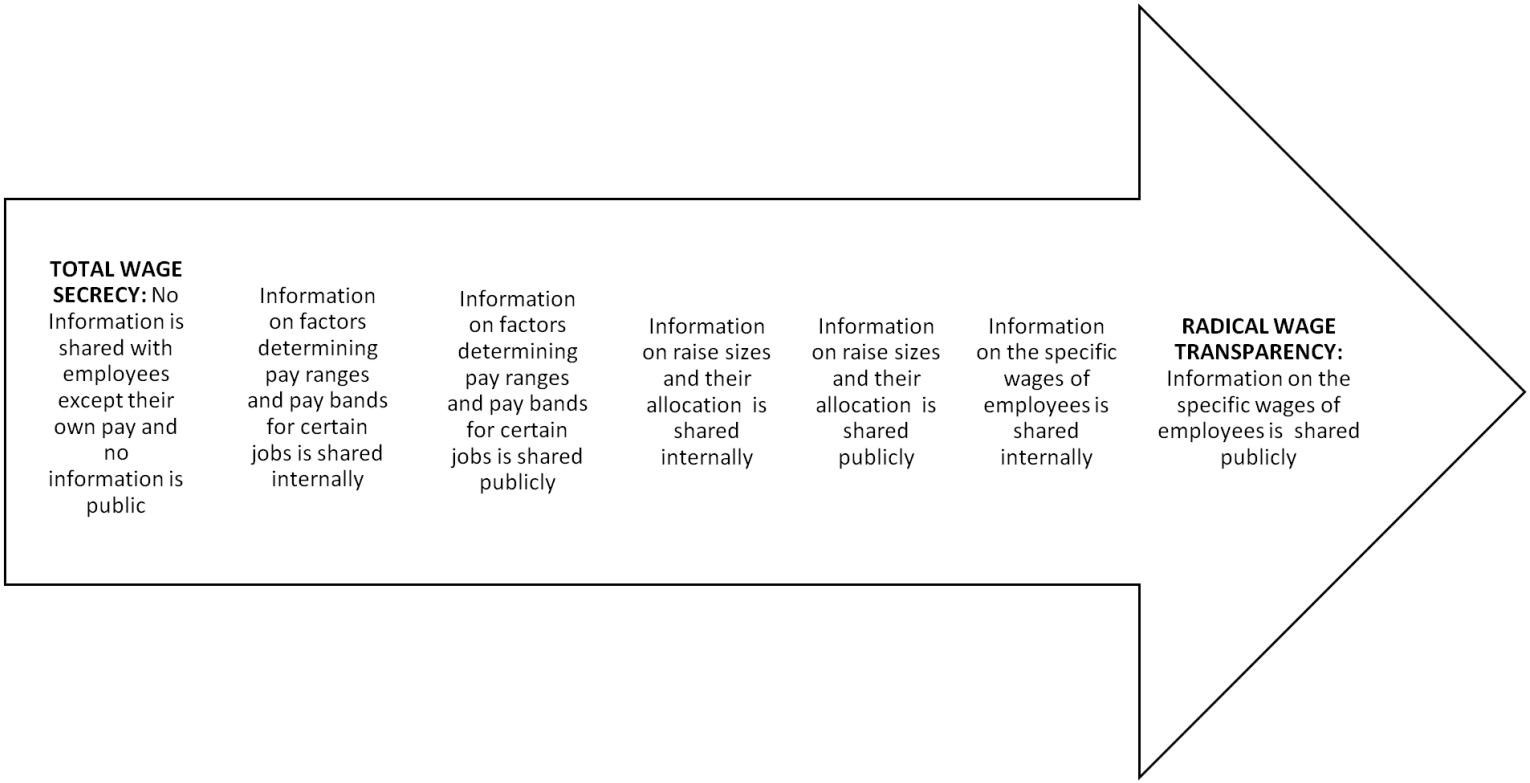
The pay secrecy to transparency spectrum should incorporate soft and hard employer pay transparency policy. In the soft sense, employers may 'allow' pay transparency by not prohibiting employees from discussing pay with contractual pay secrecy or 'gagging' clauses (Gow and Middlemiss, 2012). This passively protects employees by safeguarding their right to discuss pay without fear of formal employer retaliation. The employer is passive by not prohibiting wage discussions, but the employee must actively share wage information. The extent to which this

[21] Others include occupation, salary, and age (Schuster and Colletti, 1973).

matters depends on employees' propensity to discuss pay, in contrast to the socially constructed income-talk taboo (Fox, 2014). Passive protection may not place pay information within the grasp of employees, therefore its impact on employees' actual wage awareness is uncertain. In the UK the right to discuss pay was protected by section 77 of the Equality Act 2010 (Chapter 1). More than five years on the enforcement body, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) (2015a), was still only reporting that they were monitoring the impact of the new protection. Lack of further information suggests that the impact may not yet be significant, at least in clearly measurable ways, such as use in employment tribunals. In the hard sense, employers can create pay transparency by proactively publishing relevant pay data or analysis to employees or the public. This may be encouraged or mandated by legislation, such as the mandatory GPG reporting in the UK, or by industry norms about pay transparency. The extent to which this matters depends on the usefulness of the data to reveal any actual inequality in a way that makes seeking remedy possible.

Efforts to characterise employer 'pay communication' policy as hard or soft are under development. Colella et al. (2007) argued that pay secrecy must be considered along a spectrum to encompass the full range of hard and soft employer 'pay communication' policy. However, their spectrum only moves from a company with a formally enforced prohibition on pay discussion, to one with no norms or policies about pay discussion. Therefore, the most 'open' point is soft employer 'pay communication' policy. Burroughs (1982) proposed a broader spectrum for researching the impact of moving from wage secrecy to transparency, which also accounts for hard employer 'pay communication' policy. I have adapted this spectrum in Figure 3-2 to incorporate the distinction between employee-only and public transparency. Achieving these steps internally could help those already employed by a firm, but only public facing transparency would help jobseekers approach the negotiating table with better information. I also replaced "median" with "pay bands" in the 2nd and 3rd position on the spectrum to suggest the pay structure that may be achieved through trade union collective bargaining.

Figure 3-2: Adapted Pay Secrecy to Radical Pay Transparency Spectrum



Source: Author-adapted from (Burroughs, 1982, pp. 44–45)

Burroughs (1982) reviewed psychological research about the impact of pay secrecy on productivity, which revealed some alignment with his spectrum, but failed to address employee perspectives. Marasi and Bennett (2016) provided one of the most comprehensive and recent organisational conceptualisations of what they call 'pay communication.' They defined 'pay communication' as "the organizational practice that determines if, when, how, and which pay information (such as pay ranges, pay raises, pay averages, individual pay levels, and/or the entire pay structure) is communicated to employees and possibly outsiders" (Marasi and Bennett, 2016, p. 51). This built upon a welcome evolution from early conceptualisation of 'pay secrecy' based on the assumption that employers' options were largely to be secretive or open (Lawler, 1965b; Schuster and Colletti, 1973; Thompson and Pronsky, 1975), to a more nuanced understanding of the organisational concept along a spectrum (Burroughs, 1982; Colella *et al.*, 2007). As an organisational concept, however, pay secrecy research still predominantly focuses on employers, specifically, actions taken (or not) by employers, employer motivations for those choices, and how those actions influence company outcomes. However, the wage secrecy spectrum remains a useful heuristic from this literature for considering the impact of employer 'pay communication' policy on the OSE and subsequently the GPG and G/EPG.

3.5 Trade Unions: Litigation and Collective Bargaining

Trade union collective bargaining is also expected to bring remuneration-setting processes into the light to encourage more transparent employer 'pay communication' policy, at least by establishing pay scales (Ramachandran, 2012). However, an important difficulty is that trade union density in the UK has been on a steady decline from a peak of 55% in 1979 (Healy and Kirton, 2013) to about 25% in 2016 (Moore *et al.*, 2019). In organisations where unions are still recognised, they can influence more transparent 'pay communication' policy in two ways.

First, British unions have evolved significantly since the 1970s in regard to advocating for equal pay and using litigation as a tool to achieve it. Although union-backed equal pay litigation remains rare, it has been an effective tool to reveal unequal pay and bring information about pay practices into the open, sometimes with implications beyond a single workplace. A GMB-backed equal pay claim from 1,500 women against the Cleveland County Council was settled in 1996 for £4 million. Male-dominated jobs (gardeners and bin men) and female-dominated jobs (dinner ladies) had been rated equivalent through a 1988 job evaluation exercise yet were paid differently because only gardeners and bin men were offered productivity bonuses. Although this case had implications for Cleveland, it also revealed similar inequality problems in local authorities across the UK (Guillaume, 2015).

However, litigation is lengthy and expensive, even when successful. A second, more common way that trade unions encourage organisational pay transparency is through collective bargaining. Not only does this enforce the practice of having transparent pay scales and a union to monitor compliance, research commonly associates collective bargaining with greater pay equality. Studies have found this to be the case in the US manufacturing sector for both race-based inequality (Agesa and Agesa, 2008) and gender-based inequality, particularly in male-dominated organisations (Elvira and Sapporta, 2001). Healy and Ahamed (2019) found that unionisation and collective bargaining promoted pay transparency and generated scrutiny of company pay practices in the UK's financial sector, and they also found that unionisation was associated with smaller GPGs, even for mothers.

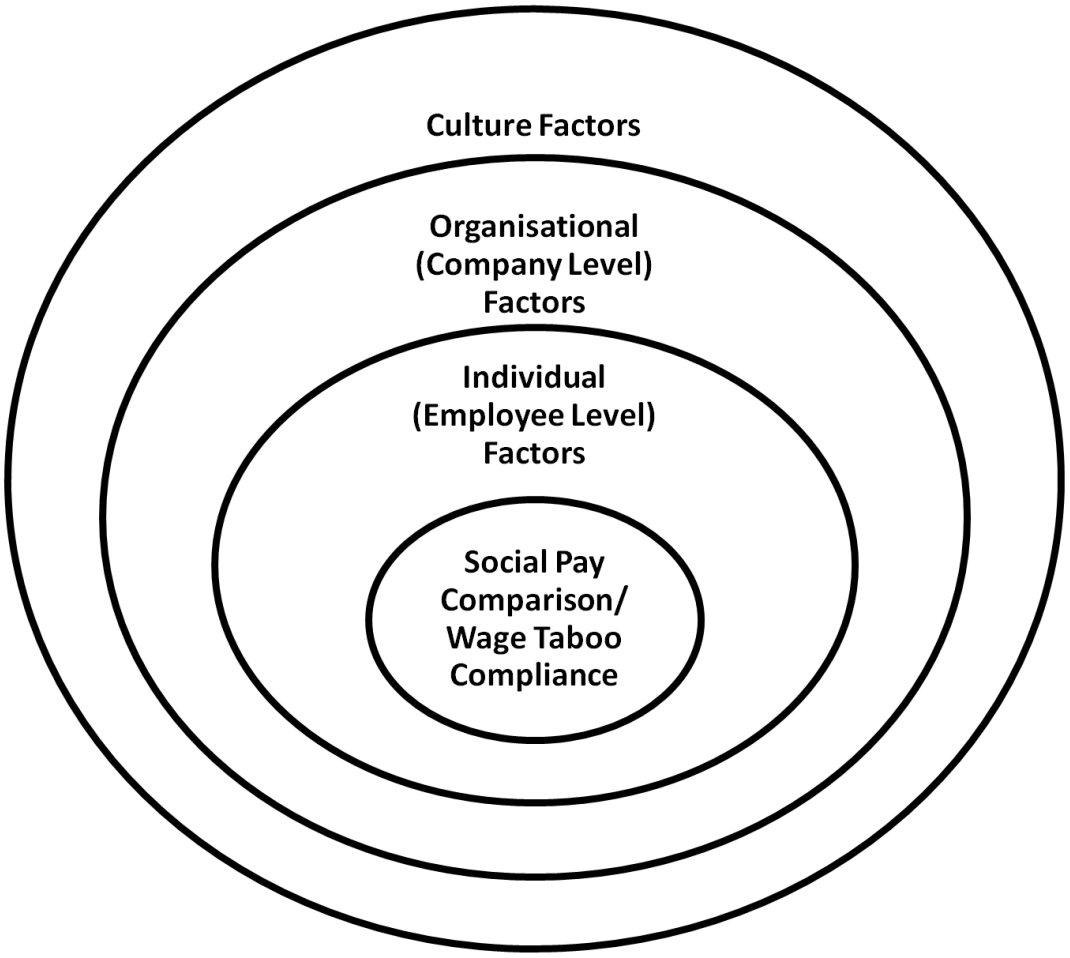
3.6 Social Pay Comparison: Individual Levers to Reveal Pay

The last pressure on pay transparency inside organisations may come from individuals. This section will illustrate to the extent to which employees are known to violate the income-talk taboo through social pay comparison, an attempt to learn how one's own pay compares with those working around them (Burchell and Yagil, 1997). This could involve personal conversations, participation in crowd-sourced wage aggregator sites (Marasi and Bennett, 2016), or even accessing trade union developed pay comparison tools (University and College Union, 2016e). Individual social pay comparison, therefore, could run counter to the secrecy influence of the income-talk taboo discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

3.6.1 Social Pay Comparison: Who Talks?

Social pay comparison can be seen as fundamental to effective collective organising at work. The National Labor Relations Act of 1935 in the US safeguards the right of workers to discuss their pay in order to enable "concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection" (Gely and Bierman, 2003, p. 126). Literature on the topic of social pay comparison suggests three categories of variables that may determine whether, and in what circumstances, individuals engage in social pay comparison or observe the income-talk taboo and remain silent. These are cultural, (institutional) company, and (individual) employee factors. They have been identified with considerably varying degrees of empirical backing, which this thesis aims to address. Figure 3-3 provides a conceptual diagram of the levels of influence on social pay comparison that are described in the limited extant literature on compliance with and violation of the income-talk taboo.

Figure 3-3: Spheres of Influence on Social Pay Comparison/Income-Talk Taboo Compliance



Source: Author's social pay comparison literature synthesis

However, the relative and interacting impacts of these factors on compliance with the income-talk taboo have been little examined. The ordering of the concentric circles in the figure above only reflects conceptually the relative numbers of people that each category of factors would impact. Individual employees work for a company[22]; all companies operate within some external culture.

Burchell and Yagil's (1997) novel analysis, from a survey of people living in England's Northampton Travel-To-Work area, explored the relative impact that individual and organisational level factors, including sex, had on social pay comparison. Initial analysis found a significant bivariate relationship between social pay comparison and several individual and organisational level factors. They found that employees who were younger, more educated, held higher skilled jobs, were not managers,

[22] This framework excludes the self-employed for parsimony.

were trade union members, worked full-time, voted for left-wing parties, had applied for other jobs within twelve months, thought their employment was insecure, and worked for larger organisations were statistically more likely to compare their wages with others than the converse. Although sex was included in the bivariate analysis, the relationship between sex and social pay comparison was not statistically significant.

The authors also ran a multivariate logistic regression using all the variables that had achieved a statistically significant bivariate relationship with social pay comparison. Occupation had the largest influence on the propensity to engage in social pay comparison, followed by school qualification, job security, working hours and employer size. Age, job skill level, trade union membership, sex, and voting intention added no further explanatory power to the model. Given the study's lack of a nationally representative sample or organisational/industry specific context, generalisability is limited. Burchell and Yagil (1997) also made no attempt to frame social pay comparison behaviour in relation to the GPG or G/EPG.

Table 3-1 summarises the factors drawn from the literature that have been suggested to encourage income-talk taboo compliance or social pay comparison and is organised according to analytical level. The factor without citation—collaborative society—is noted as a logical counterpart to competitive society, although it was not found to be explicitly discussed in the literature.

Table 3-1: Factors Theorised to Encourage Income-Talk Taboo Compliance or Social Pay Comparison

Encourages income-talk taboo compliance	Encourages social pay comparison
CULTURE FACTORS	
competitive society (Levine and Stanchi 2001, 551) individualised society (Bierman and Gely 2004, 176–77; Colella et al. 2007, 58; Triandis 1989, 509–11)	collaborative society collective society (Bierman and Gely 2004, 176–77; Colella et al. 2007, 58; Triandis 1989, 509–11)
ORGANISATIONAL (COMPANY LEVEL) FACTORS	
pay secrecy clauses (PSCs) (Bierman and Gely 2004, 168)	open pay system (Burroughs 1982, 45–46; Kulow 2013, 429)
non-unionised workplace (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 740–43)	unionised workplace (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 740–43)
small company (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 741–42)	large company (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 741–42)
private sector company (Hegewisch and Williams 2014)	public sector company (Hegewisch and Williams 2014)
INDIVIDUAL (EMPLOYEE LEVEL) FACTORS	
being a manager or supervisor (occupation deemed strongest predictor) (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 744)	being supervised (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 744)
not being a union member (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 744)	being a union member (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 744)
being older (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 741–43)	being younger (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 741–43)
being lower educated (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 741–43)	being more educated (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 741–43)
working in a lower skilled job (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 741–43)	working in a higher skilled job (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 741–43)
working part-time (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 741–43)	working full-time (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 741–43)
voting for right-wing parties (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 741–43)	voting for left-wing parties (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 741–43)
not having applied for other jobs within twelve months (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 741–43)	having applied for other jobs within twelve months (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 741–43)
thinking their employment is secure (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 741–43)	thinking their employment is insecure (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 741–43)
being female (not significant) (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 743)	being male (not significant) (Burchell and Yagil 1997, 743)

More recently, Cullen and Perez-Truglia (2018) used an experimental survey to explore how pay information is or is not shared within an organisation, which is partly related to employee reluctance to engage in social pay comparison. In terms of policy implications, the authors argued that a statute protecting the right to discuss pay with co-workers is unlikely to help employees reduce information frictions to learn more about their pay circumstances. This is because their study suggested that because of the privacy norm, people do not discuss pay even when allowed to do so. They further suggested that radical pay transparency, revealing individual's pay, would help employees less than anonymised transparency, which would reveal only average salaries for different roles. However, these findings were based on survey participants' opinions, and the study did not ascertain the process through which individual or anonymised pay data could actually help employees.

Scandinavian countries present interesting natural experiments that could shed some light on the influence of radical pay transparency on the GPG. Income tax returns, and therefore individual pay, have been public information in Norway since the 1800s, but access to this information was modernised with an online database in the early 2000s (Fernandez, 2010; Swift, 2012; Kulow, 2013). A similar exercise to make income tax returns public is also well-established in Sweden and Finland (Marcal, 2017). Notably, the Scandinavian nations are often held up as models of gender equality (World Economic Forum, 2019), although research has also shown that their progress is variable (Seierstad and Healy, 2012; Grönlund, Halldén and Magnusson, 2017). Kulow (2013) observed that Norway's GPG had narrowed since it made individual's pay publicly accessible online in the early 2000s. Unfortunately, neither of the articles she referenced to make this observation were peer-reviewed. The first, a blog post, acknowledged the unusually public nature of pay in Norway but questioned the need for such radical transparency and noted that legal access to the public database was tightened in 2011 due to privacy concerns (Brancaccio, 2012). The second, another blog, is the source from whence came Kulow's (2013) primary observation about Norway's GPG improvement, following public, radical pay transparency. However, it only referred to MSNBC's money page as evidence (Fernandez, 2010). Peer-reviewed inquiry into the relationship between radical pay transparency and a narrow GPG in the Norwegian, Swedish, or Finnish contexts could not be identified, at least in the English language.

However, unlike the majority of the pay communication literature explored earlier and Burchell and Yagil's (1997) analysis of social pay comparison specifically, Cullen and Perez-Truglia (2018) do link their study to gender-based pay discrimination literature. They find that men and women face

similar 'information frictions', which are difficulties attaining perfect information about pay in one's workplace, and hold similar levels of misunderstanding of what others around them earn, although women were less confident of their pay perceptions than men. This data interpretation is insufficient. Even accepting the applicability of this experiment to real organisational experience, their data merely reveals that men and women were equally unlikely to gain potentially 'leverage-able' pay information. It does not counter the risk that these information frictions hide discrimination or unconscious bias (Noon, 2018) in pay setting.

3.6.2 The Rise of Crowd-Sourced Wage Aggregators

While exploration of employee-created transparency in this thesis will focus on social pay comparison (Chapter 7), the rise of crowd-sourced websites for collecting and sharing anonymised pay data represents another form of pay transparency that is created by employees (Marasi and Bennett, 2016). One of the largest crowd-sourced wage aggregator and employee review website is Glassdoor. It has more than 30 million users across 190 countries (Lenaerts, Beblavý and Fabo, 2016). Other crowd-sourced wage sites include Salary.com and PayScale (Kureková, Beblavý and Thum-Thysen, 2015). A UK-based newcomer amongst crowd-sourced wage aggregators founded in 2012, Emolument allows comparison with others by alma mater, company, and industry. Its founders claim that Emolument has gained popularity within the finance sector in the City of London and is being used by employees during salary negotiations (Hutchison, 2015).

This growing trend may speak to an innate desire by employees to engage in social pay comparison to help determine what they should be earning in their jobs, even though some may not be prepared to publicly admit that desire. Reluctance to share information about wages in real life may be linked to the income-talk taboo. However, this has not stopped the development of a growing variety of crowd-sourced sites, which are often based on a mutually-beneficial model. Employee users provide their own salary data and other assessments of their employer in order to gain access to other people's data (Lenaerts, Beblavý and Fabo, 2016). Employees are thus empowered to create some level of pay transparency, which can take place regardless of societal pressure to demonstrate the income-talk taboo. The websites require no human interaction and the information provided and received is anonymised. Scholars have begun to cautiously recognise these sites as potential large-scale data sources for labour market (Kureková, Beblavý and Thum-Thysen, 2015; Lenaerts, Beblavý and Fabo, 2016) and even firm level analysis (Chandra, 2012; Huang *et al.*, 2015). Nevertheless, Estlund (2011, p. 386) argues that the data these websites provide is "random, raw, and not clearly reliable" partly due to the likelihood of skewing by "disproportionate share of company boosters and malcontents." Rosenfeld (2017, p. 14) further expresses doubt that

aggregator sites "replace the dissemination of objective wage and salary information by employers or employee organizations such as unions."

3.6.3 Trade Union Developed Wage Comparison Tools

Social partner-developed sites have also emerged to help create pay transparency. A prominent example relevant to this thesis is the University and College Union's (UCU) *Rate for the job* website, which exists to spur "debate about what constitutes fair pay for staff in our colleges and universities" (University and College Union, 2016e). However, data on this site is not user-generated. The higher education (HE) wage data comes from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) (University and College Union, 2016d) and the further education wage data was gathered through Freedom of Information Act requests (University and College Union, 2016c). It may be interesting to know whether and how HE employees use the site.

The existence and popularity of wage comparison sites demonstrates a desire of some employees to be more aware of what other people are earning. These sites may help employees to create pay transparency, thus satisfying a desire to know what salaries they should expect, without needing to challenge the income-talk taboo. The relatively recently observed trend of employee social pay comparison, sits opposite the income-talk taboo and employer 'pay communication' policy, as the primary scholarly recognition of workers' agency and power in respect of pay secrecy/transparency. Therefore, this thesis will draw on a range of relevant literature to develop a more comprehensive theorisation of pay secrecy/transparency as it applies to the UK HE context (Chapters 6-8).

3.7 Literature Gap Discussion

Finally, this section reflects upon the literature that has been reviewed in order to clarify the gap in pay secrecy/transparency literature that this thesis will fill and in order to develop the theoretical underpinning of the OSE. This begins the construction of this thesis's analytical framework, built on Acker's inequality regime components. Marasi and Bennett (2016) call for future research into pay communication mechanics, who tells what to whom and how. Costas and Grey (2014, p. 1423) identify the need for secrecy to be conceptualised as a social process in organisational research, defining organisational secrecy as "ongoing formal and informal social processes of intentional concealment of information from actors by actors in organizations." They elaborate on this distinction by explaining that:

> Formal secrecy involves bureaucratic forms of control, which attempt to directly regulate behaviour, either through formalization and standardization (e.g. organizational rules prescribing who may or may not have access to information) or indeed through legal enforcement. Informal secrecy works through normative forms of control, which indirectly

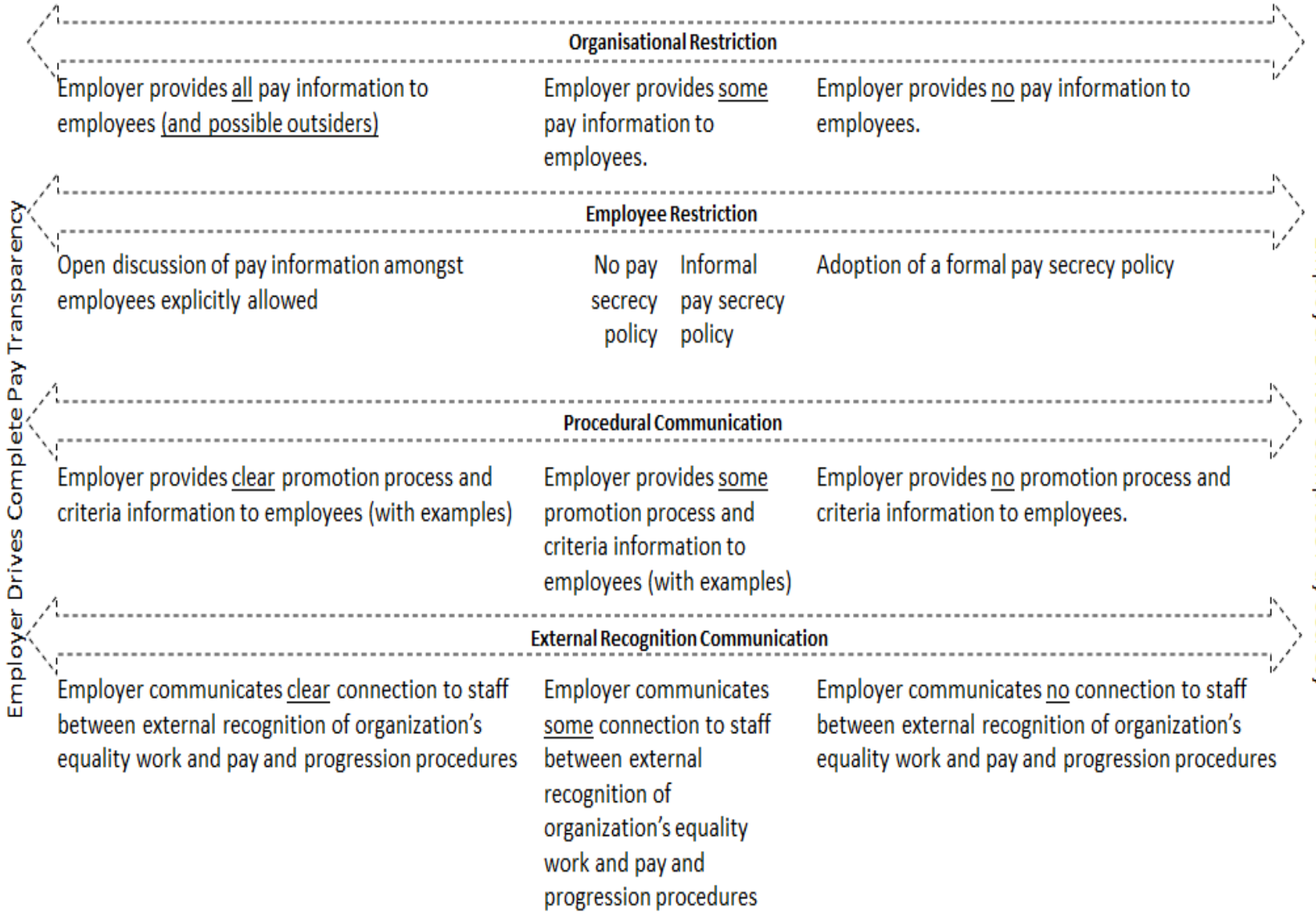
> attempt to shape individuals' behaviour through instilling certain norms, values, and beliefs. (Costas and Grey, 2014, pp. 1439–1440)

This formal/informal distinction is important for the critical analysis of the performance of the pay 'transparency agenda' in UK universities (Chapter 6), because universities are "publicly accountable organisations…the avowed policy of organizations may be one of transparency and thus the elimination of formal secrecy, while the informal practices remain secretive" (Costas and Grey, 2014, pp. 1440–1441). Characterising the organisational secrecy literature gap, Costas and Grey (2014, p. 1441) go on to argue that "the social processes of organizational secrecy, while not absent in the existing literature, lurk marginally in the shadows of organization studies, almost as secrets in themselves."

'Pay communication' is the "the organizational practice that determines if, when, how and, which pay information (such as pay ranges, pay raises, pay averages, individual pay levels and/or the entire pay structure) is communicated to employees and possibly outsiders" (Marasi and Bennett, 2016, p. 51). Influenced by the income-talk taboo, the 'pay communication' climate of organisations is significantly impacted by management behaviour and institutional policy, and also the extent to which these create practical or symbolic (Edelman, 2016) pay (and related progression) transparency.

Despite providing one of the most comprehensive and recent organisational conceptualisations of 'pay communication', Marasi and Bennett's (2016) work should be broadened. They identify two pay communication typology factors. The first, organisational restriction, refers to the release of pay information by employers to employees. The second, employee restriction, is about allowing employees to discuss their pay with each other. However, pay communication literature has a gap in terms of considering employee autonomy and perspectives. In order to begin to address this, I propose extending this typology by introducing two additional pay communication factors to account for a broader range of information that is relevant to an employee's ability to understand their pay and advocate for reform where needed. This expansion draws on Alexander's (2015) theorisation that the revelation of hidden information about work is not 'self-actuating' but requires multi-layered information, including about processes. As shown in Figure 3-4, I have added procedural communication, which is about the release of information on career progression processes, and external recognition communication, which is about how employers use equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) accreditations to drive reform of the procedures for pay and progression (or not).

Figure 3-4: Expanded Pay Communication Typology

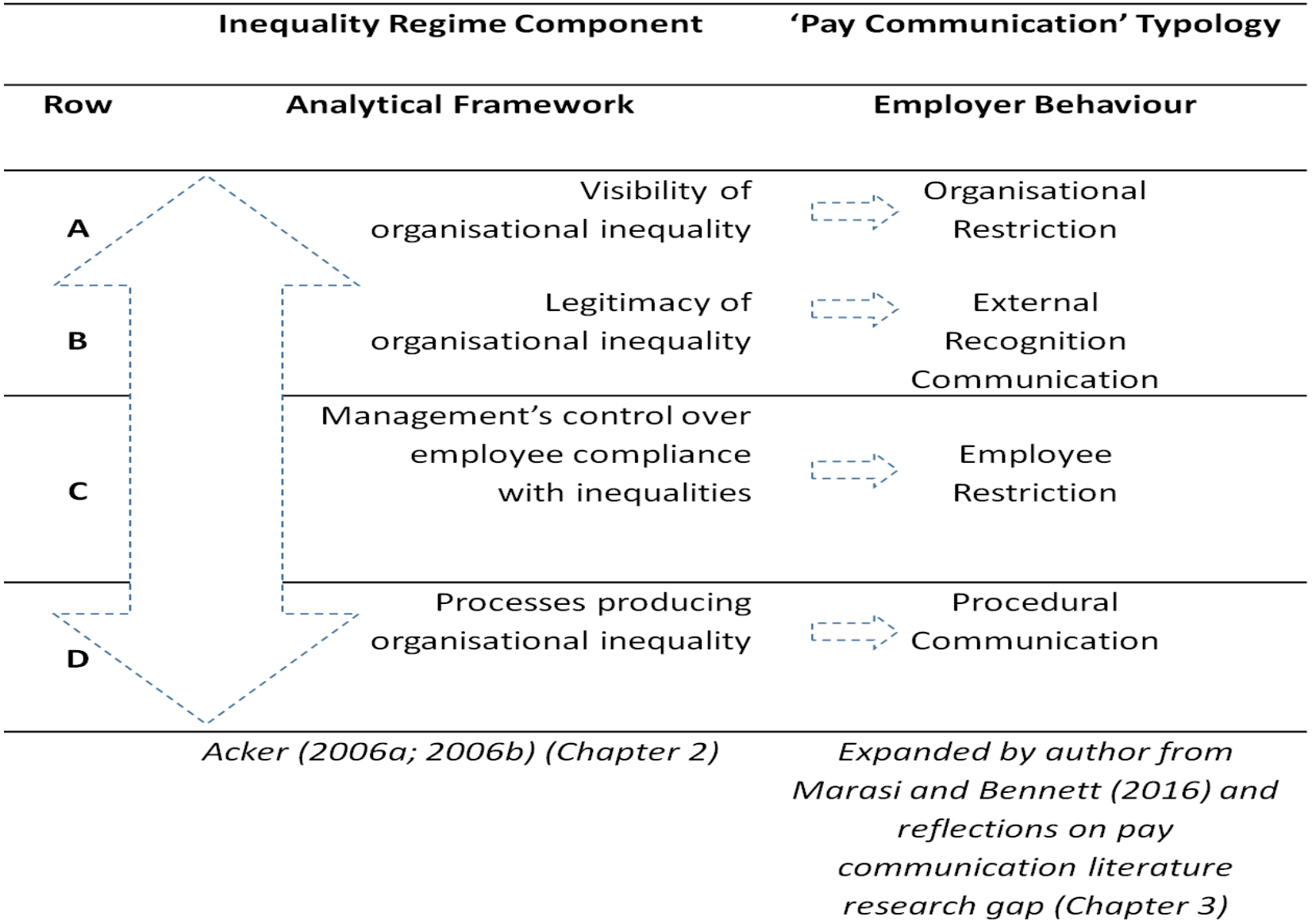


Source: Author expanded from (Marasi and Bennett, 2016, p. 52)

In order to construct this thesis's analytical framework, these pay communication typology components are mapped onto the associated inequality regime components. Acker's (2006b, 2006a) inequality regimes provide a useful foundation to this framework, in order to make visible the invisible machinations that reinforce pay inequality within organisations. Of salience to pay inequality that stubbornly persists within 'enlightened' UK universities, Acker notes that "even organisations that have very explicit egalitarian goals develop inequality regimes over time" (2006b, p. 443). The first column of Figure 3-5 lists the inequality regime components that I have adopted from Acker's (2006a, 2006b) inequality regimes. The second column maps the 'pay communication' typology components in order to demonstrate the theoretical derivation of this framework drawn from my proposed expansion of the pay communication literature, particularly Marasi and Bennett (2016). These two columns together demonstrate a mapping between four inequality regime components that can be used to analyse organisational pay transparency/secrecy, in relation to four employer 'pay communication' behaviours that are relevant to employee awareness about pay inside those organisations. This provides the theoretical derivation for the OSE framework developed in this thesis. The OSE is a multi-layered concept that will help to conceptualise what influences the openness/secrecy surrounding pay in organisations. It also allows for a more comprehensive analysis than has currently been achieved in the literature, by expanding Marasi and Bennett's (2016) pay communication typology.

The OSE framework is founded on four interlocking inequality regime components (Rows A-D), shown in Figure 3-5. Row A's visibility of inequality can be observed in terms of organisational restriction. This is the extent to which employers make information about pay public within organisations, and potentially to the public. In Row B, legitimacy of inequality can be observed in terms of how employers communicate to staff about external recognition of organisations' EDI practices and its relation to pay and related progression practices. In Row C, management control and compliance can be observed in terms of formal and informal restrictions placed on employees who may wish to discuss their own pay. In Row D, processes producing inequality necessitates exploring how employers communicate their pay and progression policies to staff.

Figure 3-5: Mapping the Pay Communication Typology onto Inequality Regimes to Theoretically Underpin the Thesis Analytical Framework



This constructed foundation of the OSE can also be understood in relation to GPG literature in Chapter 2, which explored the structural complications of occupational segregation and intersectional inequality. Pfeffer (1998, p. 95) observed that "information is power, and sharing information diffuses that power." Individual level information about the pay of a comparator (usually within the same employer) is necessary to claim the individual right to protection from workplace pay discrimination within the UK's legal regime (Gow and Middlemiss, 2012; Mills & Reeve LLP, 2012).[23] This has become more important in the UK as trade union power and sectoral collective bargaining has declined, driven by harsh anti-union legislation, which has also driven an increase in individualised employment litigation (Deakin *et al.*, 2015). Yet, individual level pay information is often closely held in workplaces, despite *limited* efforts by government legislation and employer policies to provide an *appearance* of (usually aggregated) transparency. The same Conservative party that championed pay transparency through mandatory GPG reporting in 2017, also revoked the statutory Equal Pay Questionnaire in 2014, which weakened pressure on employers to provide employees with individual level pay information (Trades Union Congress, 2015b; Wild, 2017). Furthermore, the income-talk taboo may further frustrate efforts to gain this information. Whilst the right to ask colleagues about their pay, where one suspects illegal discrimination, is protected by section 77 of the Equality Act 2010, there is no right to an answer (Chapter 1).

3.8 Summary

This chapter has constructed the case for filling a gap in pay secrecy/transparency literature by constructing the OSE as a theoretical lens through which to understand the multi-layered social processes that influence pay secrecy/transparency in organisations. The first two stages of the OSE have been constructed by aligning Acker's (2006a, 2006b) inequality regimes with an expansion on Marasi and Bennett's (2016) pay communication typology. This has been achieved by exploring the existing knowledge of sources of influence on pay secrecy/transparency within organisations, which include societal norms, government statute, employer 'pay communication' policy, trade union litigation and collective bargaining, and employee behaviour.[24] This chapter has conceptualised workplace pay secrecy/transparency by drawing on identified literature gaps, particularly the

[23] Per the UK's Equality Act 2010, hypothetical comparators can be used in limited circumstances (Gow and Middlemiss, 2012).

[24] Sources may vary with context and analysis level, like industry or workplace, which is why this chapter identified the importance of a multi-layered conceptualisation of pay secrecy/transparency within organisations. Other relevant sources of influence on organisations may include media, industry norms, and employment tribunals.

tendency of ‘pay communication’ scholarship to take the employer’s perspective, the under-theorisation of organisational secrecy, and the lack of critical exploration of the income-talk taboo. Therefore, the primary sub-research question stemming from this chapter is: Do academics in the two university case studies violate the ‘income-talk taboo,’ and if so, does this violation vary across gender or ethnicity? This will be explored in Chapter 7. Transparency/secrecy driven by government statute and industry norms and resultant employer ‘pay communication’ policy will be empirically analysed in Chapter 6, whilst the income-talk taboo’s interaction with social pay comparison (and other social interactions) will inform Chapter 8. Chapter 4 will now complete this thesis’s literature review and further build this thesis’s analytical framework with the addition of themes emerging in the literature about the pay inequality and pay secrecy/transparency context of UK HE.

Chapter 4 Pay Inequality in UK Higher Education: The Context

4.1 Introduction

This final part of the literature review will apply both explanations for the gender pay gap (GPG) (Chapter 2) and the necessity to analyse multiple levels of influence on the OSE (Chapter 3) to the context of this thesis, namely employment in the UK higher education (HE) sector. This chapter provides context level exploration, as denoted in this thesis's research map (Chapter 5), by presenting the shape and degree of inequality (Acker, 2006b, 2006a) within the UK HE sector and the pay 'transparency agenda' pressures acting upon the sector. Chapter 2 demonstrated how the GPG and gender/ethnic pay gap (G/EPG) have been analysed by labour economists and sociologists. This chapter will use the terminology of the GPG literature to describe pay inequality in the UK HE sector. It will demonstrate the persistent inequality in HE, which underscores the importance of critically analysing the 'pay transparency' performance within HE. Chapter 3 constructed the foundation of this thesis's organisational salary environment (OSE) conceptualisation by aligning Acker's (2006b, 2006a) inequality regime components with the pay communication literature (Marasi and Bennett, 2016), which will enable more comprehensive analysis of multi-layered influences on organisational pay secrecy/transparency. This chapter will also show how multi-layered power sources have reinforced the pressure on the HE sector to perform pay transparency (and improve employee awareness of pay) to foster equality. These factors range from state regulations imposed on all universities to an employment tribunal decision that cast judgment on a single university. This chapter further develops this thesis's analytical framework by identifying contextually-relevant themes through which to operationalise the critical inquiry of the performance of the pay 'transparency agenda', as experienced by academics within two UK universities, to help explain the relationship between the OSE and the GPG and G/EPG (Chapters 6-9).

4.2 Pay Inequality in UK Higher Education

This section uses the pay inequality terminology that has been adopted by previous research (Chapter 2) to describe the areas of concern within UK academia. The concepts that are applied to HE employment include:

1. The GPG and intersectional G/EPG
2. Vertical segregation with a focus on the professoriate
3. Discipline-based horizontal segregation (between science, engineering, and technology (SET) and non-SET disciplines)
4. The motherhood pay penalty experienced within an academic career

Table 4-1 summarises how each concept has been characterised within HE employment and how inequality regime framing can account for the barriers that these concepts present. Accepted 'bureaucratic' organising processes can be seen to subtly produce and re-produce structural inequality outcomes, including vertical and horizontal segregation and the motherhood pay penalty in the academic career.

Table 4-1: Applying Gender Pay Gap and Inequality Regime Language to the UK Academic Employment Context

Gender Pay Gap Terminology	Inequality Regime Component	UK Academic Employment Context
Gender Pay Gap and the intersectional Gender/Ethnic Pay Gap	Bases of inequality	Despite a sector-wide pay scale for academics (excluding professors), an aggregate gender and gender/ethnic pay gap persists.
Vertical Segregation: The Professoriate	Organising processes that reproduce inequality	The UK professoriate is predominately male and overwhelmingly white. There is a similar (even whiter) picture in Vice Chancellor offices.
Horizontal Segregation: STEM and non-STEM Disciplines	Organising processes that reproduce inequality	Variation in women's representation across disciplines and tendency's for certain to disciplines to attract market supplements in pay could interact to create pay inequality.
The Motherhood Pay Penalty in Masculine Academic Careers	Organising processes that reproduce inequality	The 'ideal' academic is 'fully committed' and has the capacity to devote long hours and an uninterrupted career to internationally-recognised research and research-led teaching.

Underscoring the importance of Acker's (2006b, 2006a) inequality regimes to demonstrating how organising processes within UK universities reproduce inequality, Fletcher's (2007) case study analysis demonstrated the blindness of UK manager-academics to structure and their tendency to blame women for experiencing inequality. Manager-academics commonly assumed that women chose work/life balance over sacrificing every waking moment to research (fully committing) and were oblivious to gendered structural issues in their university. Many male manager-academics admitted that they were unaware of a gender equity problem until it created a problem in their own lives, such as having to account for poor institutional gender equality statistics in funding bids. However, once the issue was raised, manager-academics continued to explain it through women's 'choices.' "By stressing the importance of choices made by women academics over structural constraints, manager-academics are effectively passing the buck, putting the onus on the women academics to change and refusing to take ownership of the issue of gender equity" (Fletcher, 2007, p. 273). Teelken and Deem (2013) analysed the inconsistency of university management governance with national and EU anti-discrimination policy and the persistence of gender inequality in UK, Swedish and Dutch universities; they concluded by calling for critically questioning of organisational

processes. Whilst they recommended that universities should conduct equality audits, Teelken and Deem (2013, p. 532) also encouraged "managers to realise that the existence of formal procedures for reducing inequalities do not, by themselves, either end gender discrimination or justify a lack of awareness of gender differences on a daily basis in academic work."

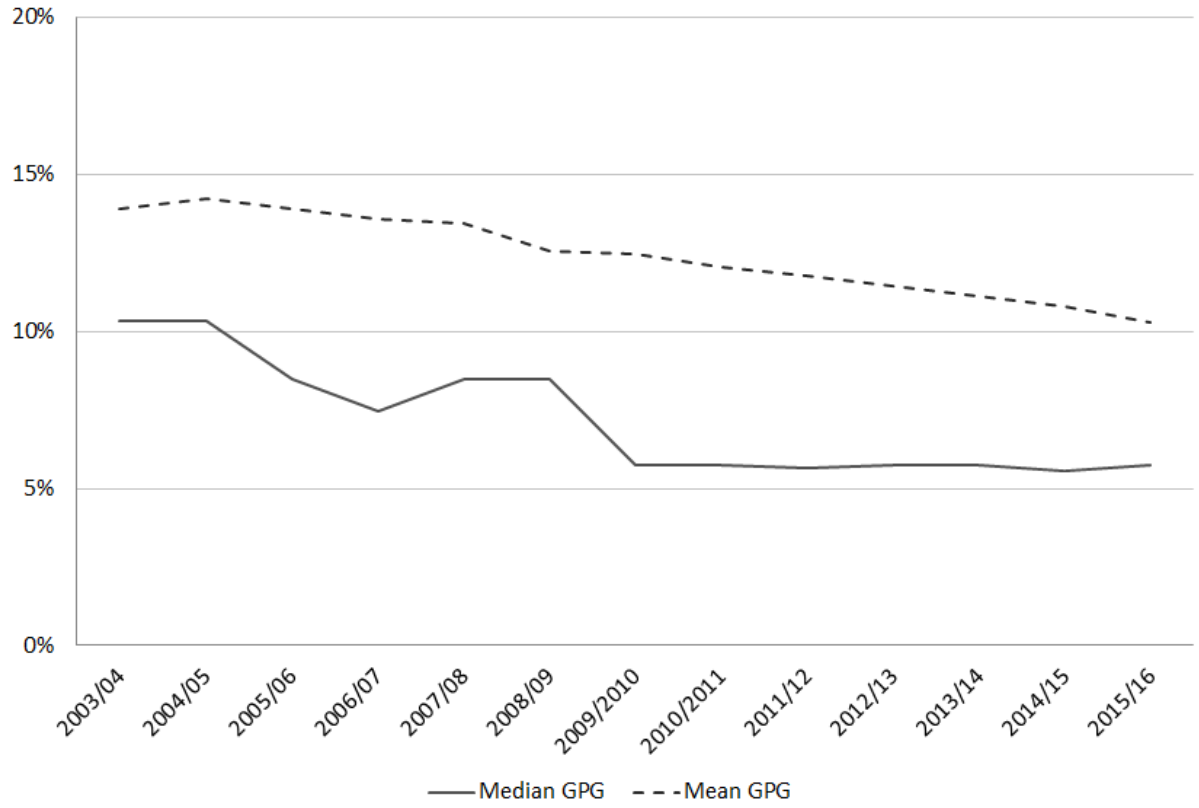
4.2.1 The Gender and Gender/Ethnic Pay Gap in Higher Education

Despite national and EU anti-discrimination policy being on the radar of UK university senior management and a sector-wide pay scale for academics (excluding professors), an aggregate GPG and G/EPG persists. The following section illustrates the aggregate GPG and G/EPG trends in HE over the 13 academic years prior to 2016/17, when the fieldwork for this thesis primarily took place.[25] This demonstrates Acker's (2006a, 2006b) inequality regime component: shape and degree of inequality within UK higher education (HE). The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) provides the most reliable pay data for full-time academics working in UK higher education (Chapter 5). The following analysis was conducted on the nominal[26] basic pay (annual salary) for all full-time academics (those on teaching, research or teaching and research contracts) in the HESA Staff Record for the academic years 2003/04 through 2015/16. As expected, the mean GPG is wider than the figure based on median salary across the analysis period. The mean GPG is vulnerable to influence by particularly high and low annual pay (Chapter 2). Therefore, Figure 4-1 indicates that there is a consistent cluster of highly paid male academics propping up the aggregate mean figure. However, a *gradual* narrowing is visible on both measures. The median academic GPG began at 10.3% in 2003/04 and narrowed to 5.7% in 2015/16 (13.9% to 10.3% using median figures). In terms of magnitude, this means that the GPG narrowed by 4.6 percentage points using median salary and only 3.6% using mean salary over the full 13-year period.

[25] See Appendix I for output tables for analysis in Figures 4-1 to 4-3.

[26] All pay gaps reported in this chapter's HESA analysis are based on nominal annual salary. However, as a further robustness check, all gaps were re-calculated following the same protocol, except using salary inflated into real 2016 terms (using the Consumer Price Index). As expected, this replicated the gap results gap results presented in this chapter.

Figure 4-1: Full-Time UK Academic Gender Pay Gap



Source: Author's analysis of HESA Staff Record 2003/04-2015/16

This contextual analysis reinforces the empirical puzzle that has motivated this study on UK HE academic employment. This publicly funded sector, which has faced significant equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) scrutiny and significant pay 'transparency agenda' pressure over the past decade, has continued to struggle with a challenging battle against pay inequality. HE trade unions have consistently brought this issue to university employers as part of sector-wide collective bargaining from the 2004 Framework Agreement for HE pay (JNCHES, 2004) to the 2016/17 national pay claim, part of which was a demand for nationally-agreed action by institutions to close the GPG by 2020 (University and College Union, 2016a). Pay inequality within UK academia can be understood with respect to bases of inequality, namely gender and ethnicity in this thesis (Acker, 2006a).

A 2011 literature review by the New Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff (New JNCHES) (2011) found no major academic analysis of the GPG across UK HE. Some have been conducted, although few since the implementation of HE's single pay spine. An early example by McNabb and Weiss (1997) found an aggregate GPG across UK academia of 16.9% in 1975, 13.6% in 1985 and 15.2% in 1992. Controlling for age, tenure, rank and faculty, a significant chunk of the gap

remained unexplained in each period, which was about a third for 1992. The authors attributed the remainder to gender discrimination or unmeasured productivity.[27]

More recent sector-wide equal pay audits reveal that an academic GPG persists, especially amongst professors, and vertical segregation is an important factor. A 2015 New JNCHES (2015, p. 8) sectoral equal pay audit found little within-level GPG (greater than 5%) for academics covered by collective bargaining, while acknowledging concerning evidence of vertical segregation.

Table 4-2: Median Gender Pay Gap using Basic Annual Salaries and Proportion of Female Staff by Responsibility Level (Full-Time Employees)

	Academics by responsibility level	GPG	Female staff	Head count
Senior Management	A0 Head of Institution – Vice-Chancellor/Principal	5.4%	19.2%	130
	B1 and B2 Deputy Vice-Chancellor. Chief Operating Officer, Registrar/Secretary	10.0%	31.9%	580
Academics	C1 Head/director of major academic area	2.5%	29.5%	475
	D1 Head of a distinct area of academic responsibility centre size 1	8.6%	29.3%	460
	D2 Head of a distinct area of academic responsibility centre size 2	5.3%	29.3%	460
	D3 Head of a distinct area of academic responsibility centre size 3	11.4%	34.8%	990
	E1 Head of a sub-set of academic area/director of a small centre	7.6%	38.2%	1,255
	F1 Professor	5.1%	23.2%	11,480
	I0 Principal lecture (Post 92), senior lecturer (pre 92), principal research fellow	1.6%	36.0%	18,320
	J0 Senior lecturer (post 92), lecturer B (pre 92), senior research fellow	0.0%	43.4%	29,970
	K0 Lecturer (post 92), lecturer A (pre 92), teaching fellow	0.0%	44.4%	23,660
	L0 Trainee lecturer, teaching assistant, research assistant	2.6%	45.1%	10,010
	M0 Junior research assistant	0.0%	54.5%	990

Source: HESA Staff Record 2013/14 analysed in (New JNCHES, 2015, p. 8)

Curiously, the New JNCHES (2016) GPG report that followed did not include such a detailed audit. The University and College Union (2017) (UCU) refused to endorse the report, partly due to this de-emphasis on the senior GPG. In response, the UCU (2017) issued their own GPG report, which demonstrated a similar concentration of men and problematic GPG within the senior ranks of academia and an aggregate academic median GPG of 12.2% (12% mean).

[27] Ward (2001) found a 15% aggregate GPG on a survey of academics at 5 established Scottish universities in 1995/96. Controlling for age, tenure, rank, faculty, and additionally publication rates, 10% of the gap remained unexplained.

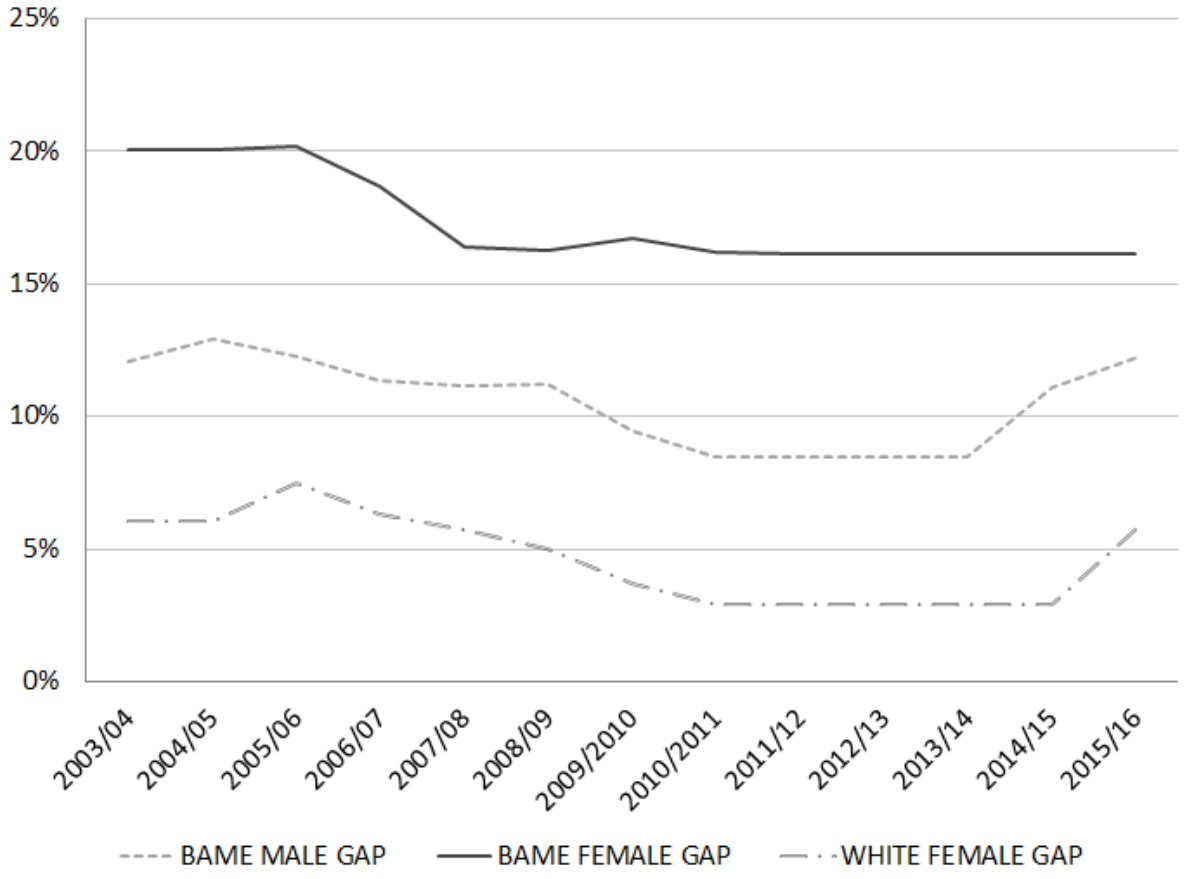
Table 4-3: Mean and Median Gender Pay Gap using Basic Annual Salaries and Proportion of Female Staff by Responsibility Level (All Academic Employees, Excluding Atypical)

	Median				Mean			
Contract levels	**Female Median Salary (£)**	**Male Median Salary (£)**	**Difference (£)**	**GPG**	**Female Median Salary (£)**	**Male Median Salary (£)**	**Difference (£)**	**GPG**
A0 to C2 Senior management	100,000	106,742	6,742	6.3%	107,105	123,298	16,148	13.1%
D&E Head of schools/senior function head	65,224	70,124	4,900	7.0%	68,033	75,778	7,745	10.2%
F1 Professor	71,685	76,561	4,876	6.4%	76,058	81,180	16,148	6.3%
F2 Function head	77,189	80,761	3,572	4.4%	73,752	81,818	8,066	9.9%
I0 Senior/principal lecturer, Reader, Principal Research fellow	55,389	55,389	-	0.0%	56,671	57,810	1,139	2.0%
J0 Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Senior Research Fellow	46,414	46,414	-	0.0%	45,570	45,874	304	0.7%
K0 Lecturer, Research fellow, Researcher (senior research assistant), Teaching Fellow	35,897	35,609	-288	-0.8%	36,695	37,064	369	1.0%
L0 Research Assistant, Teaching Assistant	30,738	31,655	917	2.9%	31,305	31,859	554	1.7%

Source: HESA Staff Record 2015/16 analysed in (University and College Union, 2017, p. 13)

As in the UK labour force, analysis of the ethnic pay gap (EPG) or intersectional G/EPG in UK HE is less developed. However, consciousness of this concern is rightly growing. The Race Equality Charter in academia, to complement the gender-focused Athena SWAN Charter, and the THE's first sector-wide ethnicity pay analysis in 2017 are part of this shift (Grove, 2017b; Bhopal and Pitkin, 2018). Institutional awareness of the intersectional disadvantage faced by women of colour in UK academia was beginning to emerge in the run up to the 2016/17 academic year. Recognising this problem, the 2015/16 national pay equality claim of HE trade unions called on universities to conduct mandatory biennial equal pay audits (disaggregating by gender, race and disability status) (University and College Union, 2015b). Although no academic analysis of the EPG or G/EPG in UK academia sector-wide could be identified, further original analysis of full-time academic pay using HESA data and an intersectional approach, indicates that BAME women academics consistently experience the widest aggregate pay gap relative to white men. This matters.

Figure 4-2: Full-Time Median UK Academic Gender/Ethnic Pay Gap

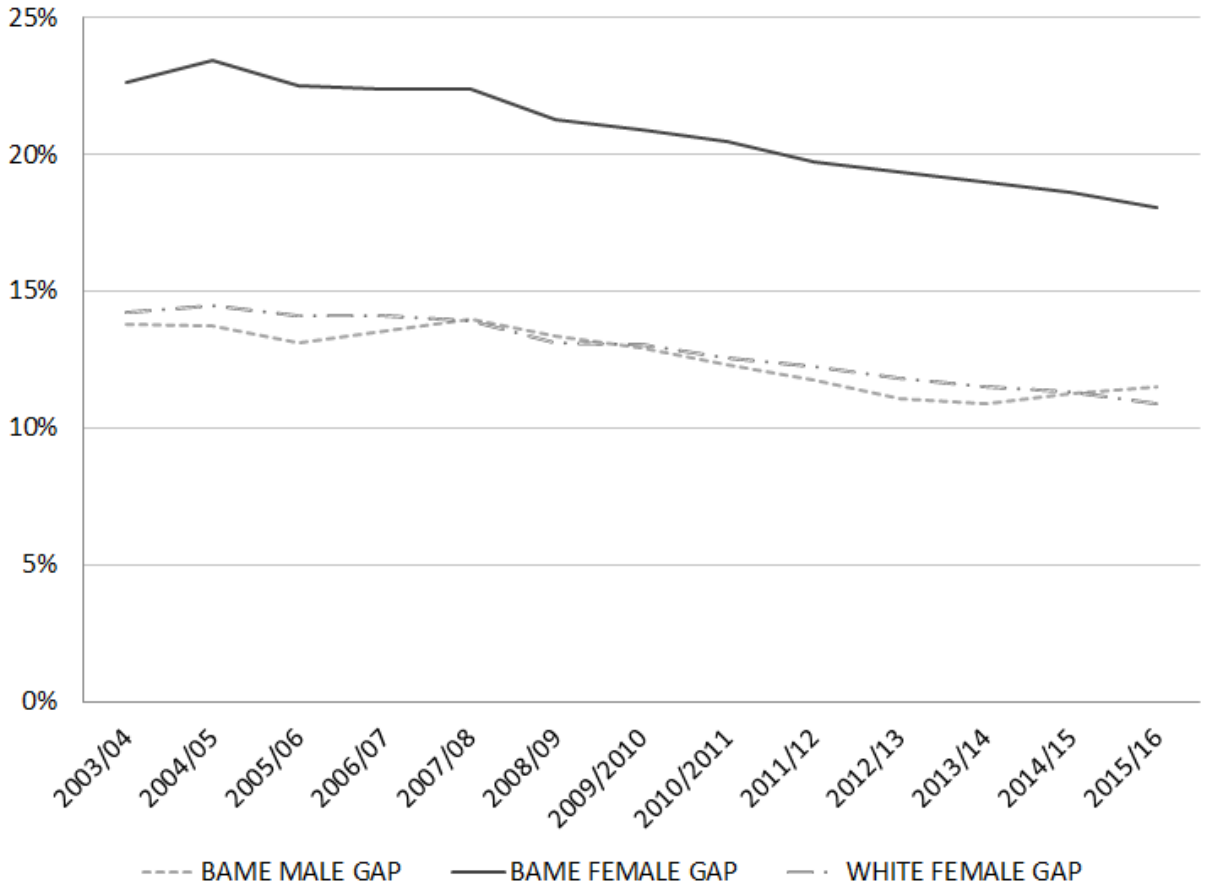


Source: Author's analysis of HESA Staff Record 2003/04-2015/16

In terms of the magnitude of change, Figure 4-2 demonstrates that the gap between BAME women and white men academics, using median annual salary, narrowed 3.9 percentage points from 20.0%

in 2003/04 to 16.1% in 2015/16 (4.6 percentage points from 22.7% to 18.1% using mean figures in Figure 4-3). The gap for BAME men, using median annual salary, slightly widened by 0.1 percentage point from 12.1% in 2003/04 to 12.2% in 2015/16 (although it narrowed by 2.3 percentage points from 13.8% to 11.5% using mean figures). The gap for white women academics using median annual salary narrowed by 0.3 percentage points from 6.0% in 2003/04 to 5.7% in 2015/16 (3.3 percentage points from 14.2% to 10.9% using mean figures).

Figure 4-3: Full-Time Mean UK Academic Gender/Ethnic Pay Gap



Source: Author's analysis of HESA Staff Record 2003/04-2015/16

At least on the aggregate, to be a BAME woman academic is to experience the greatest pay inequality relative to white male academics. Whether looking at the mean or median gaps, the pay disadvantage faced by women of colour relative to white men is clearly more pronounced than for white women, and also more so than for BAME men using median figures. The gaps for all categories, however, are also noticeably wider using mean rather than median figures, which again suggests skewing by particularly high paid white male academics.

The EPG has been explored in academic literature within specific disciplines. Blackaby et al and Frank (2000) identified an 8% pay gap between black/Asian and white academic economists, after controlling for a range of individual and institutional characteristics. The problem has also begun to attract media coverage. The THE pay survey, which had been analysing HESA data by gender for a decade, analysed the EPG in the UK for the first time in 2017. The analysis[28] showed that in the 2015/16 academic year, Black academics experienced an aggregate gap of 12.6% relative to white academics using annual salary, while Asian academics faced a 10.4% gap. Black professors experienced a 6% gap (13.3% for other senior academic roles), while Asian professors earned more on average than white professors. Small numbers of Black senior academics (just 95 professors and 30 other senior academics) limit the data's reliability but also suggest a serious inequality of opportunity at the highest levels of academia (Grove, 2017b). These aggregate pay gaps provide a signal that all is not well for HE pay, but additional concepts help to explain why: vertical segregation in the professoriate, discipline-based horizontal segregation and the motherhood pay penalty.

4.2.2 Vertical Segregation: The Professoriate

The small numbers that limit reliability of EPG calculations at senior levels also help to explain some of the GPG and G/EPG across UK academia. This illustrates vertical segregation. The embeddedness of gender and ethnic vertical segregation in UK academia, indicates the importance of critically questioning recruitment and promotion organisational practices that reproduce this disadvantageous result (Acker, 2006a, 2006b). The UK professoriate is predominately male and overwhelmingly white (Universities UK, 2018). According to the AdvanceHE (2018) staff statistical report for 2016/17 figures, only 24.6% of professors across all disciplines in the UK were women. Only 9.4% of all professors were Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME), while only 2.1% were BAME women. Only 0.6% of professors were Black. A 2019 UCU report on the barriers faced by Black female professors revealed that all the UK's Black female professors—just 26—could 'comfortably' fit in a single seminar (Rollock, 2019). In vice-chancellor's offices—the pinnacle of university power—things are similar for women and even bleaker for BAME academics. Only 24.3% of universities were headed by women, while only 5 were headed by BAME academics (AdvanceHE, 2018).

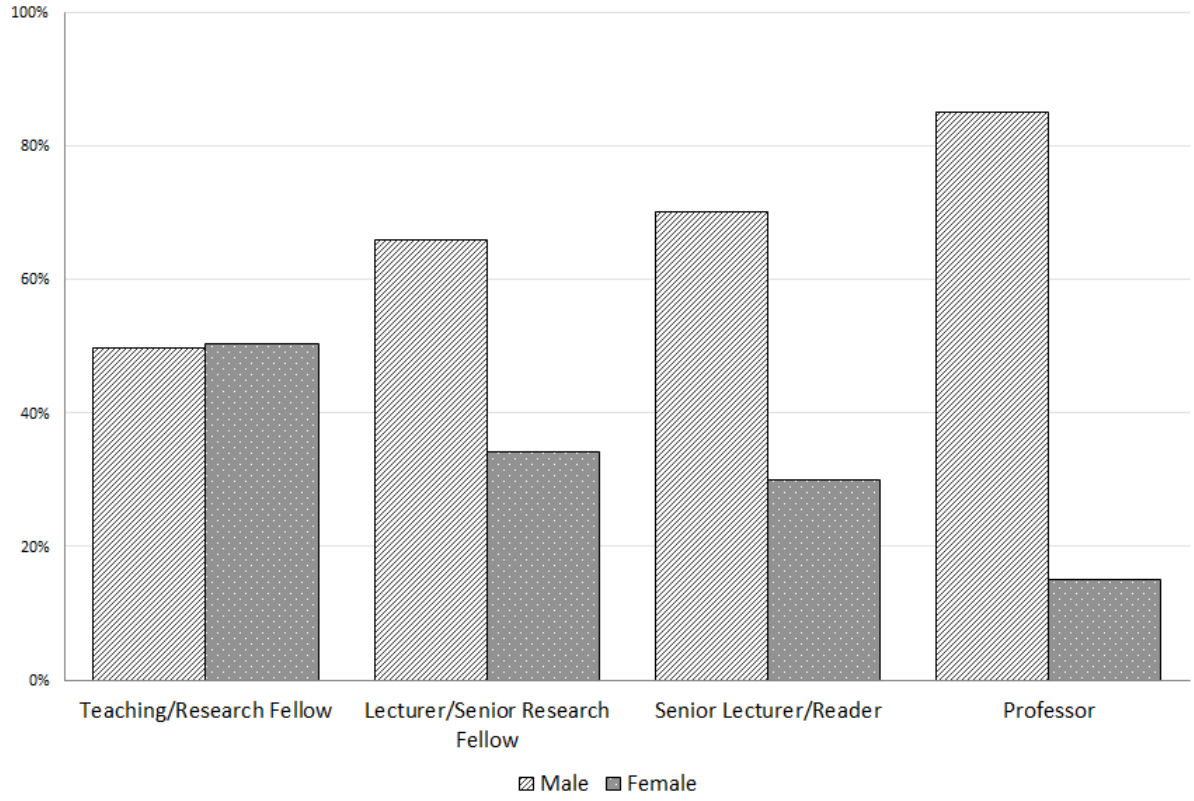
The first Black woman to lead a UK university was politician Baroness Amos as the Director of SOAS, University of London. In an interview with Grove (2017b), Amos urged that "we need to ask

[28] This analysis could not include all universities that were included in the GPG analyses due to missing data. The GPG figures were based on 154 universities, the Black pay gap was based on 114, and the Asian pay gap used 132 (Grove, 2017b).

ourselves why there is a lack of (black and minority ethnic) people in leadership positions at universities…We have equality legislation, action plans and good will, but the real challenge is implementation and we need to change the culture in HE." In a recent examination of inequality of opportunity and lack of BAME representation in UK HE academic leadership, Miller (2016) identified a significant barrier; BAME academics reported having difficulty advancing without 'white sanction.' A significant endorsement from a white academic was needed for BAME academics to garner the in-group connections necessary to get promoted. Acknowledging the difficulty of tackling such problems, Miller argued in an interview with Grove (2017b) that "to ignore what is blatantly an inequitable and racialized pay structure is to be complicit with structural inequality." These complicities were apparent in the male academic-managers earlier described by Fletcher (2007).

Vertical segregation has also been observed within specific disciplines. Analysis of online staff directories of UK political science departments revealed stark vertical gender segregation. The discipline remained majority male, having risen from only 10% female in 1978 to 30.8% by 2011, with sharp vertical segregation by academic seniority. There was gender parity amongst teaching/research fellows—precarious roles that are the lowest paid and rarely permanent—while only 15% of professors—the pinnacle of most academic careers—were female. Therefore, the data, shown in Figure 4-4, revealed a 'leaky pipeline' from precarity to the professorship in UK political science (Bates, Jenkins and Pflaeger, 2012).

Figure 4-4: Percentage of Male and Female UK Political Scientists within Seniority Level (July/August 2011)



Source: (Bates, Jenkins and Pflaeger, 2012, p. 141)

Vertical segregation is not an absolution of the HE inequality problem, even if illegal discrimination may not be present. The GPG and G/EPG in UK academia can be understood partly as an equal opportunity gap. As one advances up the academic hierarchy, the workforce becomes whiter and more male (Awesti, Flinders and Savigny, 2016), particularly in the professoriate (AdvanceHE, 2018). This equal opportunity gap must be critically interrogated. It is a problematic explanation for the aggregate GPG in a university, unless one believes that white men are inherently better suited to be professors than women, and especially women of colour. Vertical segregation suggests that there is something about the recruitment or promotion processes structurally that disadvantages certain groups. Santos and Dang Van Phu (2019) surveyed academic staff across all of the UK's Russell Group[29] universities. Using an ordered logit model, their analysis demonstrated a negative association with being a woman and academic job rank, except for a small group of academics who managed to have their children at 'career-convenient' times. Questions must be asked of the role of

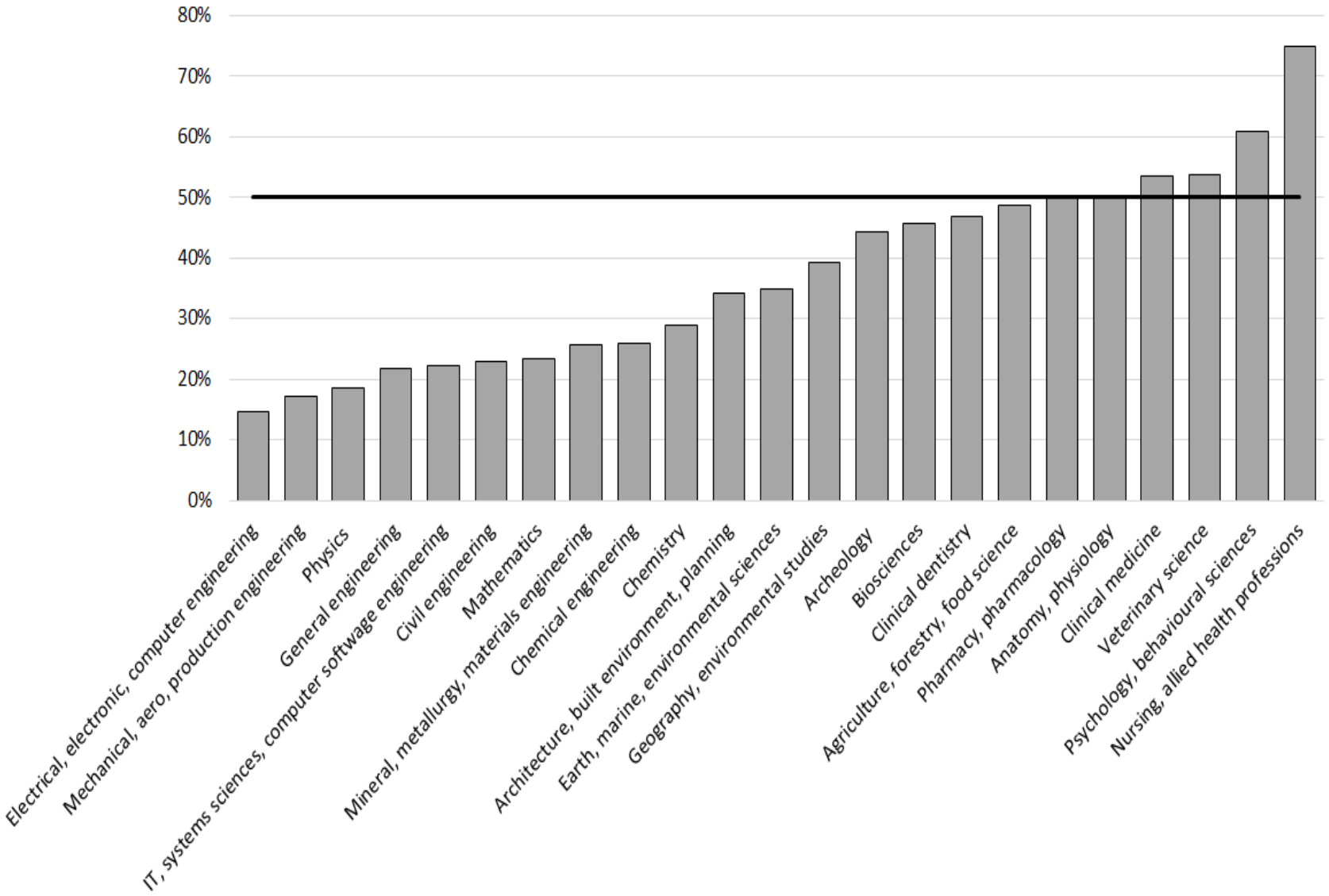
[29] The Russell Group formed in 1991 and is an association of 24 UK universities. "The self-selecting group defines itself in terms of academic excellence, selectivity, and research focus, but is criticized for being elitist and oligarchic" (Maclean, 2016, p. 182).

the organising processes (Acker, 2006b, 2006a) that have yielded this segregation: policies adjacent to these pay differences, such as the functioning of recruitment and academic promotion policies. These are processes that will be considered in more depth later in this thesis (Chapters 6 and 8).

4.2.3 Discipline-Based Horizontal Segregation

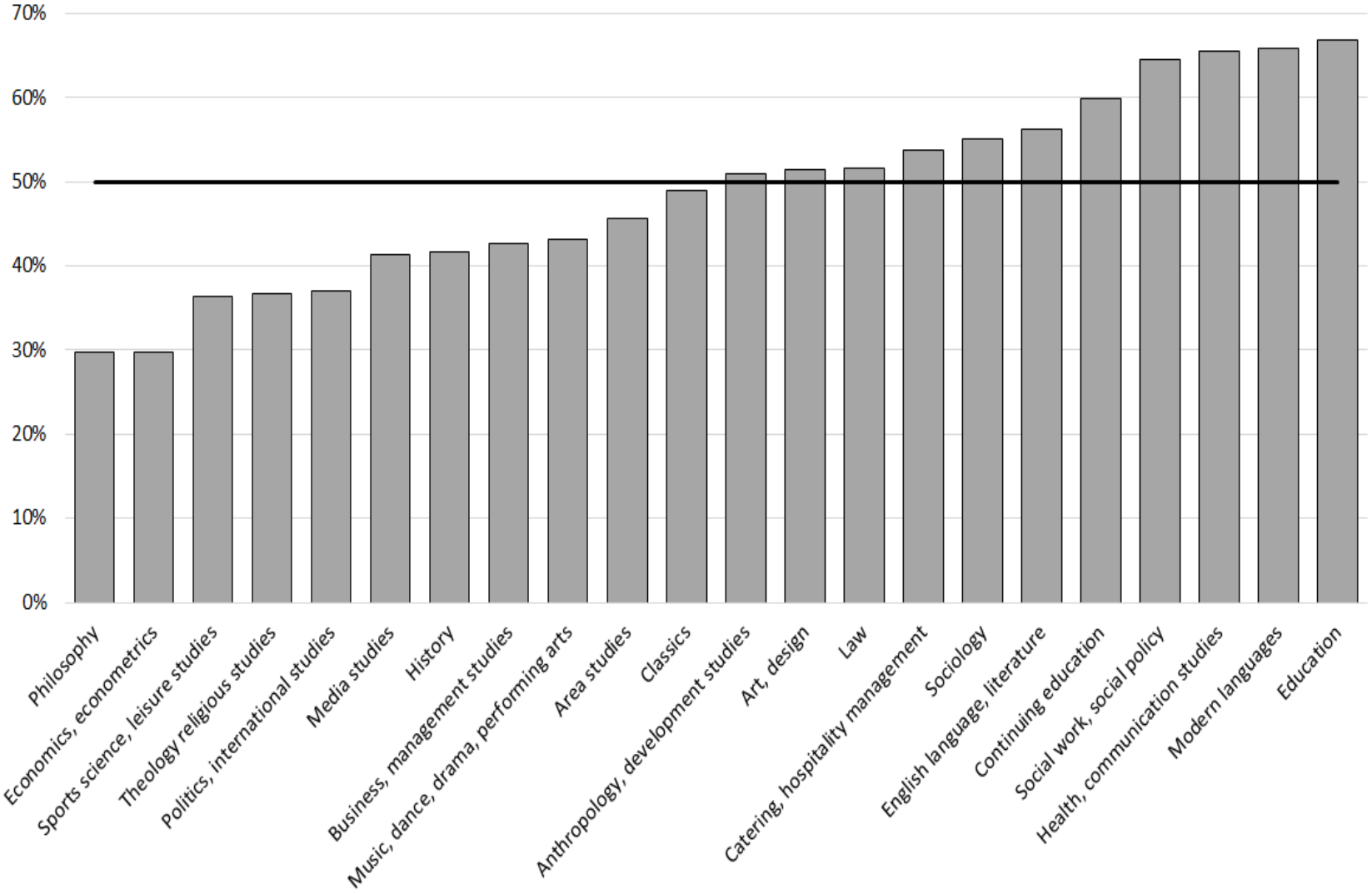
Horizontal segregation by gender is also a commonly identified factor in the headline GPG and refers to the clustering of men and women in different occupations. It contributes to the aggregate GPG through the appearance of a statistically significant penalty for engaging in so-called 'women's work' (Hegewisch *et al.*, 2010; Perales, 2013). In the academic context, horizontal segregation can be observed between academic disciplines. Horizontal segregation by discipline suggests something structural about barriers to entry, as does the motherhood pay penalty about barriers to re-entry. Women made up 41.9% of academics in science, engineering, and technology disciplines (SET), compared with 50.2% in non-SET disciplines. However, Figure 4-5 and Figure 4-6 show dramatic variations by discipline.

Figure 4-5: Proportion of Female Academics in UK SET Disciplines (2016/17)



Source: (AdvanceHE, 2018, pp. 218–219)

Figure 4-6: Proportion of Female Academics in UK Non-SET Disciplines (2016/17)



Source: (AdvanceHE, 2018, pp. 220–221)

Horizontal segregation within academia should not substantially contribute to the aggregate GPG. UK universities set academic pay according to their pay scales, which are based on the sector-wide collective bargaining agreement. The lecturer pay range in economics should be the same as in English within a university. Professorial pay sits above this collective agreement (JNCHES, 2004). However, there are two potential complications to this assumption, which are market supplements and retention supplements. These extra payments to attract or keep a prized member of staff are used "to cope either with distinctly robust demand for faculty in various disciplines or with the (sometimes potential) robust demand for individuals because of the excellence of their academic records" (Doucet, Durand and Smith, 2008, p. 69). They introduce discretion into a pay structure that is otherwise described by a published pay scale. It is important to note that aggregate GPG figures based on basic pay only would render gender differences in these supplements invisible. It is difficult to observe the equalities implications of these awards, particularly if a university does not clearly publish data on their use, disaggregated by protected characteristics.

Nevertheless, the equalities implications of market and retention supplements may be substantial. For instance, evidence from the employment tribunal decision, *Professor EJ Schafer v. Royal Holloway and Bedford New College (2011),* has illustrated how a poorly justified retention supplement helped a female professor secure legal remedy. A male professor was issued this payment, supposedly to retain him at the university, despite it being his second such payment in as many years and having recently failed to secure an external offer following an interview elsewhere (Mills & Reeve LLP, 2012). Analysing the GPG for UK economics academics, Blackaby et al. (2005) found that women were less likely to receive the outside job offers that can lead to retention supplements in pay at their current institution, controlling for qualities known to influence academic job market competitiveness. They also found that women who did receive outside job offers experienced a smaller salary boost than men. Blackaby et al. (2005, p. F103) concluded that "although there is evidence that women are disadvantaged in promotions, there is also a within-rank pay gap. Effective policies to remedy the GPG must therefore look not only at promotions but also at entry wages, accelerated increments and discretionary points the top of Lecturer and Senior Lecturer scales."

No academic literature demonstrating the equalities risks of market supplements in UK HE, such as between disciplines, could be identified. Data on the use of market supplements in UK HE is elusive. However, there are some indications of the prevalence of the practice, which persists in the sector due to resolute negotiation by employers when the current sectoral-collective bargaining

framework was agreed. Some employers were already using market supplements in certain disciplines, including IT, law, accountancy, and business studies (NATFHE, 2005, p. 11). The University and College Employers Association's (UCEA) Higher Education Workforce Survey 2017 reported on UK recruitment and retention but did not provide any solid figures on the use of market supplements. The report only noted that interviews suggested that pay levels were generally competitive and the UCEA pay data showed that market supplements were used sparingly. No analysis of this data was presented by the UCEA (2017). Anecdotally, in October of 2017, University College London's School of Management posted a shockingly high market supplement for a lecturer role advertised with a salary range of £42,304 to £52,240 annually, plus a market supplement of £40,000.[30]

However, the gender equality concerns of market supplements have been demonstrated in the Canadian higher education sector. Doucet et al. (2008) conducted a logistical regression on the awarding of market supplements across a faculty in one Canadian university, where basic pay was determined through collective bargaining, which is similar to the UK context. After controlling for several individual traits, including academic discipline, women were three times less likely to receive a market supplement than men. Low levels of women in disciplines with high levels of market supplements would exacerbate this trend. Therefore, although academic research is limited in this area, there is a need for closer investigation of market and retention supplements through inclusion of pay and pay-related policies, which will be included in this thesis (Chapter 6).

4.2.4 The Motherhood Pay Penalty for Academics

The unequal division of household labour, particularly regarding parenthood, has been observed as an explanation for the GPG (Donath, 2000). Parenthood has been linked to the motherhood pay penalty (Waldfogel, 1998; Budig and England, 2001; England, 2005) and career stagnation for women (Abendroth, Huffman and Treas, 2014) and for men, the fatherhood pay premium (Hodges and Budig, 2010; Petersen, Penner and Høgsnes, 2014). The 'ideal' academic must devote long hours throughout an uninterrupted career to internationally-recognised research and research-led teaching (O'Meara, 2015), which illustrates the gendered organisation of academic work that is based "on the model of the unencumbered (white) man" (Acker, 2006b, p. 450).

Having children has been observed as damaging to women's career progression in the UK HE sector, which is partly linked to parental leave. Ward (2001) demonstrated that the most important

[30] Thanks are due to Ms. Dee Chambers, senior staffing officer of the school, who confirmed the accuracy of this figure by email and noted that the rate was necessary to compete with other business schools.

influence on UK academic salary was being full-time employed, which suggested limitations for those seeking to balance work and family by working part-time. This limitation was exacerbated by a statistically significant penalty of 1.4% for every month taken out of the workforce, which was used as a proxy for time taken to care for a child. Blackaby et al.'s (2005) study of UK economic academics did not find a direct negative impact of career breaks on pay but demonstrated an indirect effect. They found that career breaks reduce outside job offers, which are often hugely important to securing significant increases in pay.

In their qualitative analysis of the masculine 'meritocratic' gendered nature of UK academia, Knights and Richards (2003, p. 213) argued that "the typical academic career path is structured according to a male perception of success: research-active, participating in the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE),[31] an uninterrupted career history." A more recent Royal Society of Chemistry report noted that female, in contrast to male, doctoral students echoed this perception of academia as a masculine career path, which expects mothers to make considerable sacrifices, places huge hurdles to returning to work, and has generated few role model mothers mastering this balance (Newsome, 2008). Although parenthood, specifically motherhood, is not a factor that will emerge as a key theme that shapes the OSE *directly* in this thesis, these barriers that are faced by academics as mothers are relevant to promotion demands and the murkiness of promotion reward policy implementation processes that will be later unveiled (Chapter 8).

4.2.5 Discussion

This section has placed HE's pay inequality problem within the language of GPG analysis in order to highlight the problematic bases of inequality, particularly gender and ethnicity. It also indicates some of the problematic organisational processes which reproduce this inequality, particularly promotion, recruitment, market supplements, and the intersection of promotion and maternity leave policies. While pay gaps can be subjected to complex decomposition techniques (Chapter 2) to help explain their persistence, quantitative assessment risks overlooking the means by which organisational processes reproduce structural inequality. In this context, legitimate controls for differences in pay, such as productivity measured by publication (Ward, 2001), are themselves impacted by bias (Miller and Mctavish, 2011; Schucan Bird, 2011; Knobloch-Westerwick and Glynn, 2013; Knobloch-Westerwick, Glynn and Huge, 2013; Maliniak, Powers and Walter, 2013; Smith *et al.*, 2015; Hengel, 2017). Yet, publication measures that unlock access to higher pay are used unquestioningly in academic promotion procedures (Caffrey *et al.*, 2016). However, questioning this

[31] The RAE was replaced in 2014 with the Research Excellence Framework (Stern, 2016).

process in the university context is paradoxically made difficult, partly due to the multi-layers of influence that have pressured HE employers to perform 'pay transparency.'

4.3 Multi-layered Transparency Performance Pressures Acting on UK Higher Education

This section will identify multi-layered power sources that have pressured UK university employers to perform pay transparency—ostensibly to create more transparency about reward to improve pay equality—in the decade preceding the 2016/17 academic year. The power sources will be discussed moving from those furthest from, to those closest to, the individual university organisations, and include pressure from the following levels:

1. The state's Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) implementation
2. The media spotlight from the Times Higher Education (THE) pay survey GPG league tables
3. Sectoral collective bargaining that resulted in the national Framework Agreement for HE pay (excluding professors)
4. Industry norms and equality frameworks, like the Athena SWAN Charter
5. A landmark employment tribunal decision flagging equality concerns for professorial pay secrecy

Table 4-4 summarises how each of these levels of power has pressured UK universities to perform 'pay transparency.' The PSED placed requirements on universities to create public visibility and thereby legitimate existing arrangements, leaving the impression that the university is 'doing' something even if 'something' never occurs. The THE pay survey created institutional level GPG visibility, with messaging that university senior management cannot control. University participation in the Equality Challenge Unit's (ECU) voluntary equality frameworks can be seen in a similar light of creating visibility and legitimacy through the appearance of senior management engagement. UCU-led sectoral collective bargaining sheds light on ways that organisational pay setting practices could reproduce inequality. Finally, a key employment tribunal posed substantive legal pressure on universities to make professorial pay setting practices more transparent.

Table 4-4: Multi-layered Sources of Pressure on University 'Pay Transparency' Performance in the Decade before the 2016/17 Academic Year

Level of Power Influence Encouraging Pay Transparency Performance	Inequality Regime Connection (Acker 2006b, 2006a)	UK Academic Employment
The State	Visibility and Legitimacy of Inequality	The PSED created limited statutory pressure on HE employers to publicly analyse employment inequality. The PSED has potential to make inequality visible (or merely give this impression), while increasing legitimacy when senior management are seen to be engaged. However, this legitimacy may be hollow as HE employer compliance can be criticised in terms of completeness, vagueness, and instrumentality.
The Media	Visibility of Inequality	The Times Higher Education Pay Survey began publishing the institutional-level academic GPG in 2007. This pre-dated the mandatory GPG reporting requirement on HE employers by a decade and indirectly led to a landmark equal pay claim.
Sectoral Collective Bargaining	Organisational processes that reproduce inequality	The 2004 National Agreement represented an effort by HE's trades unions to negotiate a job evaluation scheme to ensure equal pay for work of equal value across the sector. However, employer pressure to maintain the flexibility of market and retention supplements creates discretion in pay that risks re-enforcing inequality.
Industry Norms/Equality Watchdog	Visibility and Legitimacy of Inequality	The Athena SWAN Charter has set out noble goals to improve career prospects for women in STEMM and now all of UK academia. This has created industry normative pressure, reinforced by links to funding access, to make inequality visible in similar and reinforcing ways to the PSED, while at the same time increasing legitimacy of remaining inequality by indicating the problem is being addressed. However, serious concerns that the process exacerbates women's promotion barriers, while fundamentally failing to address structural inequality emerge.
Employment Tribunal	Organisational processes that reproduce inequality	This decision sent a warning shot to UK universities that individualised, unpublished professorial pay determination processes created a risk of gender-based pay discrimination. However, universities have not unanimously responded by instituting formal and transparent professorial pay banding processes and structures.

4.3.1 The State: The Public Sector Equality Duty

Chapter 3 described the UK state's role in promoting large employer 'pay transparency' performance through mandatory GPG reporting. Although universities will have been aware that these regulations were imminent during the 2016/17 academic year, when this thesis's fieldwork was concentrated, universities had not yet been required to report. Therefore, this discussion of the state's power to encourage 'pay transparency' performance in academia as a tool to reduce the GPG and other elements of protected-characteristic based inequality, will focus on the original PSED that was in place. PSED compliance can be seen as making inequality visible and lending legitimacy to existing arrangements by demonstrating that the university is 'doing' something (Acker, 2006b, 2006a).

At the turn of the millennium, UK statute fundamentally shifted institutional responsibility for promoting equality (not just eliminating discrimination) to public sector employers. This shift applied to public universities through the race equality duty in 2001, the disability equality duty in 2006 and the gender equality duty in 2007 (Gow and Middlemiss, 2012). The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) was established in October 2007, partly to enforce these duties (House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, 2019). The gender equality duty required employers to undertake equal pay audits every three years (New JNCHES Equality Working Group, 2011). Equal pay audits, also referred to as 'equal pay reviews' in HE, require methodical analysis of pay between men and women doing equivalent work, including identifying causes of any differences revealed and working to remedy unjustified discrepancies (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2018).

However, the Equality Act 2010 created a combined duty that replaced these separate duties; section 149 of the Act created the PSED. The PSED general duty came into force on April 5, 2011 across Great Britain. It required relevant employers, including universities, to demonstrate 'due regard' for three principles, but it did not prescribe how. The principles required employers to "eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010…advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups…[and] foster good relations between people from different groups" (Equality Challenge Unit, 2017, pp. 1–3).

Presenting a renewed opportunity to nudge universities to perform 'pay transparency', the PSED's specific duties for England came into force on September 10, 2011.[32] The three specific duties placed on English universities included:

1.) publishing equality information, including about employees with protected characteristics;
2.) setting at least one measurable equality objective to support its PSED duties; and
3.) publicly publishing compliance with the first two objectives (Brill, 2011).

As Schedule One public authorities within the regulations, universities' first reporting deadline was January 31, 2012 (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2011b; HM Parliament, 2011). PSED compliance could have helped make workplace inequality visible in universities as a first step toward reducing that inequality. Under the new PSED, universities could still choose to use equal pay audits to demonstrate part of their compliance with the specific duties, although these audits were no longer required. When Acker (2006a) wrote about visibility in organisations, she acknowledged that inequality tends to be visible to those whom it harms (women, ethnic minorities) and invisible to those who benefit from their (often white) male privilege. Theoretically, PSED compliance should be equally visible to all in organisations, particularly given the requirement to publish this compliance publicly online. However, the risk was that compliance would be low or, worse, become a superficial tick-box exercise, as suggested by Ahmed's (2007) critique that equality and diversity work within UK universities had become embedded within 'performance culture.' In her analysis of university engagement with the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, from whence the race equality duty came, Ahmed (2007, p. 102) cautioned against the risk that "the document becomes not only a form of compliance but of concealment, a way of presenting the university as being 'good at this' despite not being 'good at this.'"

Contrasting assessments of PSED compliance by the HE sector have emerged from employer, trade union and government perspectives. From the employers' perspective, a UCEA representative characterised equal pay audits as embedded university practice. This could suggest that removing the requirement to conduct equal pay audits when the PSED replaced the gender equality duty would be inconsequential. In her testimony before the House of Commons Select Committee on Women and Equalities (2016, p. 80), about equal pay audits being an important tool for reducing the GPG in UK HE, UCEA Chief Executive, Helen Fairfoul, maintained that "[equal pay auditing] has been embedded as habitual practice in the HE sector for many years now…It is a starting point for an

[32] Separate specific duty regulations apply to Scotland and Wales (Government Equalities Office, 2010). The thesis case studies are located in England.

employer to have an interest and to be prepared to do the analysis, to look at where there are discrepancies and to ask questions." However, unions expressed concern that the harmonised PSED weakened the specific reporting requirements of the separate equalities duties. Although the PSED gave universities more flexibility in pay and equality transparency performance, the UCU (2015a) encouraged local branches to pressure their institutions to conduct equality pay audits as part of their compliance.

From the government's perspective, the EHRC analysed compliance with PSED reporting following the first reporting deadline in 2012. They found that universities were the least compliant group of public body employers at adequately publishing employee information (Pavitt, 2013). A 2018 report contracted by the EHRC showed improvement, although still 11% of further and higher education employers failed to publish even one equality objective publicly online, which is the second specific duty. A key finding of the report was that the statutory duty does not guarantee compliance; contextual factors, like EHRC monitoring and enforcement are important. Within HE, voluntary equality frameworks, including the Athena SWAN, Gender Equality, and Race Equality charters, were additional drivers of compliance. Whilst voluntary, the link imposed between Athena SWAN and access to significant medical research funding was believed to strengthen compliance (Kotecha *et al.*, 2018).

Therefore, PSED compliance in HE can be criticised in terms of completeness (some universities fail to comply), vagueness (requirements were weakened from the separate equality duties), and instrumentality (acting to gain access to research funding via Athena SWAN risks tick-box compliance). It has the potential to make inequality visible (or merely give this impression), while also increasing the legitimacy of existing arrangements by presenting the university as 'doing' something. Concerns about PSED compliance within HE highlight the need for critically analysing how the case study universities make inequality visible (Acker, 2006b, 2006a) by performing the transparency required for PSED compliance, which could involve equal pay audits or reviews (Chapter 6).

4.3.2 The Media: The Times Higher Education Pay Survey

While the PSED created weak legislative pressure on universities to become more transparent about employment equality performance, the THE has placed reputational pressure on institutions by imposing institutional level transparency. The THE (2019) is the UK's leading HE media publication. Originally the Times Higher Education Supplement to the Times of London in 1971, it became an

independent publication in 2005.[33] The THE boasted a global weekly readership of 380,000 (online and in-print), including 3.8 million unique online UK viewers from August 2016 to August 2017. Their professional readership includes junior academics (31%), senior academics (22%), and senior leaders (5%), with the remainder in temporary, professional or support roles (Times Higher Education, 2017a, 2017b).

The THE produced a degree of institutional level pay transparency in UK universities over the decade preceding the 2016/17 academic year. This transparency was somewhat analogous to the mandatory GPG reporting that universities were aware was upcoming (Chapter 3) because it was presented at the institutional level. The THE Pay Survey[34] has been published annually at least since 2007[35] and includes returns of nearly all public UK universities to HESA. The publication provides the mean average salary of male and female full-time UK academics by institution. These publications make inequality visible, without giving universities the chance to legitimate conditions by demonstrating their engagement. Universities greatly emphasise reputation maintenance (Ahmed, 2007). Senior management may react defensively to these findings, as they have no power over the accompanying narrative.

In 2007, statistics were only reported for all full-time male and female academics, without disaggregating by levels within academia (Fearn and Newman, 2007). Further disaggregation was produced in the 2008 to 2017 publications but with variation. Figures for all academics were consistently reported since 2007 and for professors since 2008 (Fearn and Newman, 2007, 2008; Fearn, 2009; Morgan and Fearn, 2010; Morgan, 2011a; Times Higher Education, 2012; Grove, 2013a, 2014, 2015b, 2016a, 2017b). It is a shortcoming of this publication—and indicative of the tendency to emphasise the GPG first and the EPG second—that the EPG was only analysed for the first time in the 2017 report (Grove, 2017b). Aggregate UK-wide EPG data was provided in the article text, but

[33] Thanks are due to John Morgan for email verification of this date.

[34] As of March 9, 2019, only one explicit mention of this survey in academic journals could be found. However, this was only a brief mention in a recent analysis of the negative impacts of neoliberal English university hierarchies on early career researchers. Two articles about the survey were used to evidence the claim that professorial, and especially senior management, pay had outpaced minimal growth of remuneration for others in academia (Maclean, 2016).

[35] Thanks are owed to John Morgan and Ingrid Curl for email verification that no records of this exercise could be found in the THE publication archives prior to 2007. The UCU appears to have been involved initially, as the 2007 publication credits the UCU with conducting calculations. Later publications attribute the analysis to public services firm Grant Thornton or make no attribution. However, THE journalist Simon Baker expressed via email that the initiative was led by the THE and motivated primarily by readers' significant interest in the topic.

these figures were not broken down by institution and were not intersected with gender. Therefore, they did not compare BAME men and women academics separately against white male academics.

Nevertheless, the decade of institutional level GPG reports suggests something of a natural experiment to test the impact of institutional pay transparency on the OSE and pay inequality.[36] It also raises a question of the degree to which these reports are noticed by employees. All the academic and professor-only reports that are available from 2007 to 2017, and which refer to data for the academic years 2005/06 through 2015/16, will be analysed in Chapter 6, contextualising trends in the case study universities against the sector, while awareness of these reports and any impacts stemming from it will be considered in Chapter 8.

4.3.3 Sectoral Collective Bargaining: The UCU and Framework Agreement

Union-led sectoral collective bargaining has sought to press universities to consider how organisational pay setting practices could reproduce inequality. Following two years of negotiations, the Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff (JNCHES) agreed the collectively bargained Framework Agreement in 2004 with an effective date of August 1, 2006. JNCHES is the sector-wide collective bargaining body consisting of the UCEA and the recognised trades unions in HE.[37] They included: Amicus, AUT, EIS, GMB, NATFHE, TGWU, and UNISON. The Agreement created a national pay spine onto which local pay scales were to appropriately map, partly with the aim of ensuring equal pay for work of equal value. This still fundamentally structures pay for academics in public UK universities today[38], although professorial pay sits above this agreement (JNCHES, 2004; University and College Union, 2016b).

Whilst the publicised intention of the Agreement was to create greater reward fairness across UK HE, with a particular aim to narrow the GPG (New JNCHES, 2015), the pay inequality concerns raised earlier remain. The JNCHES also intensified pressure on universities to systematically analyse pay equalities outcomes following implementation. The Agreement nudged universities to complete an equal pay review within one year of local implementation. JNCHES had issued guidance to universities about such reviews in 2002, updated in 2007 and again in 2013 (JNCHES, 2013). Noting the inconsistency between the Agreement's equality compliance aims and its exclusion of

[36] QMUL PhD candidate Danula Gamage is exploring this natural experiment using the difference-in-difference method to analyse HESA data to reveal if this treatment has had any positive impact on women's pay.
[37] The UCU formed on June 1, 2006, as an amalgamation of the Association of University Teachers (AUT) and the National Association for Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) (Carter, 2008; University and College Union, 2018).
[38] The Agreement also covers non-academic pay to a comparable level, but this thesis focuses on academic pay.

professorial and senior management pay, the Prondzynski (2012) Review of Higher Education Governance strongly advised the application of pay scales to all university staff, including vice-chancellors.

As demonstrated in Acker's (1989) ground-breaking analysis of comparable worth implementation in Oregon's public sector, union collective bargaining efforts to improve gender equality are not always successful and sometimes reproduce inequality (Peruzzi, 2015). In this context, however, employers presented the barrier to success. Despite strong union objection to interference with job evaluation principles, the Agreement explicitly allowed "attraction and retention premia" only if an agreement on the functioning of such payments was agreed locally at a university. Attraction premia are also known as market supplements; retention premia are also known as retention supplements. The Agreement advised that local agreements should be based on "robust data on local and national labour markets and compliance with equal value legislation" (NATFHE, 2005, p. 11). Employers argued that these discretions were necessary to retain essential flexibility in order to recruit in certain difficult to fill disciplines or geographic regions, and some employers already had these supplements in place (NATFHE, 2005).

However, such discretion presents potential concern in respect of the GPG. Specific advice was given in the Agreement to address this concern. The Agreement recommended that universities include "attraction and retention premia" monitoring by gender, ethnic groups and disability status in their equal pay reviews and ensure that any differences in pay of those doing "like work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value, which arise from attraction and retention premia, can be objectively justified and, if not, that corrective action is taken" (JNCHES, 2004, p. 15).

4.3.4 Industry Norms: Voluntary Equality Frameworks

Following the implementation of the Framework Agreement, some UK universities have begun to engage with voluntary HE equality frameworks to demonstrate commitment to organisational equality, diversity, and inclusion norms. University participation in voluntary self-regulation can be seen in a similar light to PSED compliance. It involves similar and reinforcing activities, such as analysing staff data by protected characteristics and creating action plans to address issues that emerge (Kotecha *et al.*, 2018; Rosser *et al.*, 2019). Engagement creates visibility of inequality through documentation, while simultaneously enhancing the legitimacy of existing arrangements due to the 'appearance' of senior management action (Acker, 2006a, 2006b). The use of 'appearance' here acknowledges the cynical belief that these frameworks fail to threaten the masculine 'meritocratic' gendered nature of UK academia (Knights and Richards, 2003). There is

widespread concern that the implementation of such frameworks creates focus on fixing 'disadvantaged' people through mentorship schemes (Devos, 2008; Morley, 2013) or 'gaming' the award criteria (Bhopal and Pitkin, 2018), rather than creating necessary structural and cultural change (Maddrell *et al.*, 2015).

The ECU[39] was responsible for overseeing and validating several of these equality and diversity voluntary self-regulation schemes, including the Athena SWAN, Gender Equality, and Race Equality charters (Equality Challenge Unit, 2017). This thesis will focus on Athena SWAN. The Gender Equality charter had already been subsumed into Athena SWAN during the 2016/17 academic year. The extent of participation in the Race Equality charter was too small to allow this thesis to identify whether the case study universities had achieved this award, without potentially jeopardising institutional anonymity. It is sufficient to recognise that a similar voluntary framework existed to promote race and ethnicity-based equality, which was launched in 2014 (P. Miller, 2016). Bhopal and Kalwant (2018) provide a comprehensive recent assessment of its implementation and propose reforms.

The ECU[40] was a charitable body that supported "universities and colleges to build an inclusive culture that values the benefits of diversity, to remove barriers to progression and success for all staff and students, and to challenge and change unfair practices that disadvantage individual groups" (Equality Challenge Unit, 2018e). The ECU founded the Athena SWAN charter in 2005 to promote women working in the UK HE disciplines of science, technology, engineering, maths, and medicine (STEMM). Award judging is based on a self-assessment written by a committee within the institution (or department), which is then assessed by a volunteer committee of academic and HR staff from other institutions. Universities must first receive at least a bronze award before their constituent departments can apply. Institutional and departmental awards come in bronze, silver, and gold. Possession of an Athena SWAN award sends a legitimating message to staff and the public that the organisation has embedded strong gender equality principles with respect to staff and students (Gregory-Smith, 2017).

In May 2015, the scheme was extended to include all disciplines, which ended the need for the separate Gender Equality charter that had been run for non-STEMM disciplines since 2014 (Gibney,

[39] The ECU merged with the Higher Education Academy and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education to create AdvanceHE (2018) in March 2018.
[40] The ECU also published guidance to help universities understand their PSED obligations (Brill, 2011; Pavitt, 2013; Equality Challenge Unit, 2017).

2013; Equality Challenge Unit, 2018a, 2018b). Voluntary uptake, alongside the development of Athena SWAN as an HE industry norm, grew as the award became tied to key funding eligibility. In 2011, the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) restricted its shortlisting to medical schools with a silver Athena SWAN award for two key funding streams, Biomedical Research Centres and Biomedical Research Units (Gregory-Smith, 2017). In 2013, Research Councils UK,[41] the umbrella partnership of the UK's seven research councils, announced its policy to require all funding applications to demonstrate evidence of institutional and departmental level engagement with equality and diversity. Although the policy did not explicitly require an Athena SWAN accreditation, this was listed among the types of desirable evidence (Research Councils UK, 2013b, 2013a). Some have felt that the instrumentality of Athena SWAN participation, by linking the award to research funding access, created pressure to perform the motions without upsetting the power inequalities that reproduce inequality inside the universities. This linkage is seen by some as controversial (Munir *et al.*, 2013), in a similar sense to those who criticise the business case for diversity management (Knights and Omanović, 2016).

A New JNCHES (2015, pp. 9–10) report in July 2015 credited Athena SWAN with ensuring that HE employers maintained "focus on addressing specific pay gap issues." However, the ECU only added an equal pay audit/review section to the Athena SWAN institutional application under the new post-May 2015 rules. Prior to that, an assessment of the GPG was not required, even at the institutional level. The original handbook did not even mention the terms 'equal pay audit' or 'gender pay gap' (Equality Challenge Unit, 2014, 2015a). This is surprising, as measuring pay is somewhat simpler than measuring the equity of a promotions process, which was strongly encouraged (Equality Challenge Unit, 2014). This is especially surprising given ECU's preference for demonstrating quantifiable progress, requiring that "actions (and action plans) should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound)" (Equality Challenge Unit, 2014, p. 11).

Therefore, the question remains: has Athena SWAN made inequality visible and created legitimacy of existing arrangements by driving structural or cultural change or has a mere veneer of equality been fabricated? It is relevant to this thesis to understand whether such industry normative, employer-led forms of the transparency of pay-related policies like promotion, recruitment, and appraisal—and eventually pay itself—actually help to narrow the GPG or improve women's career progression. In 2013, the ECU commissioned Loughborough University researchers to assess the Athena SWAN charter's effectiveness. While this review demonstrated an overall favourable impact

[41] RCUK became UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) in April of 2018 (Ghosh, 2018).

of Athena SWAN on women's career progression, which is important in a context where vertical segregation is a major explanation for the GPG, this impact was measured through a survey of employee perceptions of fairness and equality within their university (Munir *et al.*, 2013).

A more relevant measure of Athena's SWAN's effectiveness would seem to be women's *actual* career progression and associated pay. As Gregory-Smith (2017, p. 18) asserted, "the acid test is whether voluntary initiatives such as Athena SWAN can deliver measurable improvements to the employment prospects of women." To this end, he applied the difference-in-difference method to data from the UK Medical Schools Council about academic clinicians because medical schools appeared to be heavily invested in Athena SWAN. He tested the impact of two developments on women's employment outcomes, including their presence in the school, professorial status, and part-time status, but not the GPG. The developments tested were the 2005 launch of the Athena SWAN charter and the 2011 NIHR decision to make a departmental Athena SWAN silver award a requirement for key funding streams. He found no causal relationship between either of these developments and an improvement in women's employment outcomes. Gregory-Smith (2017, p. 17) observed that, without more detailed analysis of actual organisational practices within Athena SWAN award holder departments, the results suggest that "either the progressive policies voluntarily introduced by the Athena SWAN adopters are insufficient to change female employment patterns (at least in the period under observation), or that Athena SWAN adopters are falling short in their application of the Charter's principles."

A number of critical assessments of practices inside Athena SWAN organisations have emerged that suggest that the adopters are falling short of the Charter's principles. These assessments include the unequal burden of Athena SWAN labour on women and junior staff, gender bias embedded into 'meritocratic' promotion procedures, individualising gender, race and ethnicity-based disadvantage, and a blind-spot for growing precarity in the university. First, Munir's (2013) evaluation for the ECU confirmed a preponderance of women bearing the not-inconsiderable burden of Athena SWAN labour and recommended that this problem be considered by the ECU. This problem is amplified given that this labour is not seen to directly contribute to women's academic career progression, whilst it directly limits research output capacity, which does contribute (Caffrey *et al.*, 2016). This is an example of what Hirshfield and Joseph (2012) called 'identity taxation', the extra labour that women and BAME employees are often tasked with, but not rewarded for, in their careers. It is unclear what, if any, steps the ECU has taken to address this issue (Ovseiko *et al.*, 2016). This frequently women-led Athena SWAN work is time and resource-intensive and, without any direct

grant funding to support it, is often "reliant on goodwill and interest in the cause" of those with control over the university's business plan (Rosser *et al.*, 2019, p. 606). Given the known difficulty of navigating masculinised university micro-politics in efforts to change the gendered status quo (Parsons and Priola, 2013), this is likely to be challenging.

Secondly, gender bias is embedded into the promotion procedures that are presented as 'meritocratic', despite the ECU's aims to fix the so-called 'leaky pipeline' that is responsible for male-dominated hierarchies in academia. Under the pre-2015 rules, the ECU (2014) strongly encouraged the demonstration of an equitable promotions process. Under the post-2015 rules, the ECU (2015a) provided a detailed prescription of how to demonstrate this, including promotion application and success statistics; an explanation of how promotion candidates are selected, informed about the process, trained or mentored; and assessment of staff perception of the process, including whether it is fair and transparent. Notably, the handbook also requires "commentary on the criteria for promotion, including how university policy and practice considers the impact of career breaks on promotions: comment on how the full range of work-related activities (including administrative, pastoral and outreach work) are taken into consideration" (Equality Challenge Unit, 2015a, p. 48). Implicit in this text is the instruction to demonstrate that research output is not the predominant factor in academic promotions.

Nevertheless, the pressure to publish remains essential to academic promotion (Caffrey *et al.*, 2016). This has been driven by growing competition between universities through the Research Excellence Framework (REF), which determines access to significant government research funds. Universities have put in place increasingly challenging research 'performance' targets on academics in order to game the metric (Morrish, 2016). However, the same metrics mentality that drives the Athena SWAN understanding of whether departments and universities are fairly promoting women (Smith *et al.*, 2015) is also linked to gender biases in the academic publication processes that are tied to these performance management endeavours. Research about women (half the population) is considered niche and struggles to break into 'mainstream' (highly rated) academic journals (Miller and Mctavish, 2011). Research by women is seen to be lower quality (Knobloch-Westerwick, Glynn and Huge, 2013), held to higher readability standards, and takes longer to reach publication than for men (Hengel, 2017)**.** Women are also less likely to publish (Schucan Bird, 2011; West *et al.*, 2013), and when they do, their work is cited less frequently than men's research. Citation is a measure of research impact (Knobloch-Westerwick and Glynn, 2013; Maliniak, Powers and Walter, 2013). King et al.'s (2017) fascinating study of all citation-linked academic articles in the online repository JSTOR

from 1779 to 2011 revealed that about 10% of all citations are self-citations—instances of the author citing their own work. However, men were 56% more likely than women to self-cite over the full period and 70% more likely in the last 20 years. While the paper could not establish a conclusive cause and effect relationship, a clear implication is that recruitment and promotion committees should ensure that measures of research impact disregard the direct and indirect positive influence of self-citation to reduce gender bias.

Research about BAME academics working in the UK has revealed their experiences of being additionally held back by the lower esteem in which non-Western journals, particularly those based in African countries, seem to be held by the REF. BAME academics feel a necessity to publish more than their white counterparts to achieve the same promotions (Bhopal, 2015). An illustration of publication bias is suggested in the business and management field. In the 2018 Chartered Association of Business Schools Academic Journal Guide, there were no 4 or 4* rated (top) journals with the word 'gender' in the journal title and none on the list at all with the word 'race' or 'ethnicity' in the title (Chartered Association of Business Schools, 2018). Publication in top journals on this list is essential to achieving promotion in UK business schools, and it is treated as a proxy for good REF contributions. Özbilgin (2009) characterised academic journal ranking as a tool to maintain white male hegemony within academia. In an adapted use of Acker's (2006b) inequality regimes, he argued that top rated journals tend to exclude emancipatory research that challenges "hegemonic structures by increasing the visibility and illegitimacy of 'inequality regimes'" (Özbilgin, 2009, p. 2) by revealing various social problems.

Thirdly, universities have begun to create mentorship programmes, which are often specifically linked to women and people of colour (Teelken and Deem, 2013). Athena SWAN specifically asks for information about the mentoring offered to support promotion (Equality Challenge Unit, 2015a). While diversity-aimed mentoring may provide useful enrichment and networking connections in the short term, they fundamentally aim to fix the individual, not the structure that is disadvantaging people (Devos, 2008; Morley, 2013; Dashper, 2019). Therefore, there is a risk of individualising experiences when women and BAME academics take longer than white male academics to achieve promotion. A recent study of academic managers at pre-1992 (old) universities demonstrated that the women in this pool were no less ambitious or likely to put themselves forward for senior management positions than men. This underscores the risk that efforts to fix individuals, without addressing the bias imbued within organisational structures, is likely to fail (Shepherd, 2017).

Lastly, Athena SWAN reforms ring hollow while universities refuse to substantively engage with structural inequality that is created by toxic working environments. This includes growing early-career precarity and workload intensification, which themselves often present gendered and racialised barriers to career advancement (Blackaby, Booth and Frank, 2005; Maddrell *et al.*, 2015). The UCU led a significant industrial action involving 74 universities across February and March of 2020 in which the dispute partly centred on workload intensification and precarious working conditions. In the midst of that dispute, leaked minutes of a virtual meeting of leaders of Russell Group universities, revealed some acknowledgement of the scale of precarious work at their institutions, although plans to remedy the problem appeared to be primarily motivated by a desire for reputation management (University and College Union, 2020a).

4.3.5 Employment Tribunal: Professor EJ Schafer v Royal Holloway and Bedford New College

While Athena SWAN has presented universities with the (somewhat missed) opportunity to grapple with the structural inequality that is re-produced by organisational practices, a landmark employment tribunal decision also pressured individual universities to reflect on how a veil of secrecy over pay setting practices, risks running afoul of the law. In 2007, Professor Elizabeth Shafer began investigating professorial pay, alongside some of her female colleagues, after reading about the academic GPG at her institution in the THE's first pay survey (Schafer, 2011). Professorial pay was individualised, having been excluded from the HE sector's collective bargaining agreement (JNCHES, 2004). However, pressure on universities to at least perform the 'transparency agenda' for professorial pay came instead from Schafer's 2011 employment tribunal (ET) decision (Ward, 2011).

Discrimination claims bring processes that reproduce inequality into the light (Acker, 1991); Acker (2006a) identified individualised pay setting as such a process. ETs are the final-stage mechanism for employees to exercise their individual right to be protected from discrimination.[42] *Professor EJ Schafer v. Royal Holloway and Bedford New College (2011)* [43] began life in the inquiring mind of Professor Elizabeth Schafer, a drama and theatre studies academic, who had once been head of her department. Three other women joined Professor Schafer (2011) in what she described as a

[42] Trade unions sometimes use the threat of legal action to achieve collective bargaining victories, but employers, knowing that the ET process is resource-intensive and outcomes can be unpredictable, are not always swayed. So, unions also support members at ETs, which, even if successful, can take years. Pamela Enderby was supported by her union in one of the landmark cases establishing the right to equal pay for work of equal value in *Enderby v. Frenchay Health Authority and Secretary of State for Health (1993)*. This case was appealed all the way to the European Court of Justice and took more than 10 years to reach a successful resolution (Gow and Middlemiss, 2012; Conley, 2014).

[43] As of March 9, 2019, no discussion of this ET claim could be found in any academic journals, which is why the narrative has been compiled from media coverage and the ET decision.

“gruelling four year battle” of discovery that led to an employment tribunal, although the others settled with the university days before the hearing. The women were supported in this battle, first by a local UCU caseworker and later by UCU legal support (Lewis, 2011; Schafer, 2011; Ward, 2011; Chilver, 2018)**.** Professor Schafer described this support as essential, underscoring the difficulty that many individuals experience in exercising their individual rights to equal treatment against a powerful employer. She explained:

> Without the backing of the UCU, I could have funded my case only by re-mortgaging my home. Fortunately, the UCU had been looking for a case to test whether professorial pay stood up to scrutiny because it was so unregulated across the sector. A few institutions were introducing banding systems but the norm was, and is still in most universities, very odd: newly appointed professors, having spent all their years working in higher education moving up a clearly marked out, nationally negotiated salary scale, are suddenly set adrift in a free market and may have to bid for pay rises without any idea of the rules of the game. (Schafer, 2011)

The claim was decided based on the professorial pay processes that had been in place at the time the claim was made, and it examined starting salary, annual pay reviews, head of department (HoD) allowances (extra duty supplements) and retention payments (market supplements) for Professor Schafer and her comparators. The decision noted that Royal Holloway lacked a written policy for pay setting on becoming a professor, basing decisions on unwritten principles of 'custom and practice' that had developed. The VC who had enacted many of the 'custom-based' decisions of relevance to the case, was no longer employed by the university and provided no evidence for the hearing (Schafer, 2011; Mills & Reeve LLP, 2012; Chilver, 2018).

The tribunal criticised the annual pay review process for lacking any defined principles required to achieve a pay rise, although the ET felt it had not been a material cause of pay disparity in this case. Inconsistencies in HoD allowances were also criticised, but these were not found to have created a gender-based disparity in this case. The allowances were meant to be paid during tenure as HoD, but some staff, seemingly arbitrarily, had the allowance added to their base pay afterwards, while Professor Schafer had not. Lastly, the decision criticised the basis of retention payments as tainted by sex. Although the decisions could be based on ‘genuine material factors’ other than sex, the reliance of these decisions on genuine or perceived geographical mobility put women at a disadvantage. The decision also noted that the university had no formal process in which to market test professorial salaries, although it had practical experience in doing so (Schafer, 2011; Mills & Reeve LLP, 2012; Chilver, 2018).

The tribunal's decision delivered tempered success to Professor Schafer. As with most legal decisions, it was conservative, but it harshly criticised Royal Holloway for lacking a transparent professorial pay system, which created a risk of gender-based pay discrimination. This justified analysing the outcomes of several specific pay decisions. One retention payment was determined to have been unjustified, having been issued to a man for whom it was his second in as many years and who had recently failed to secure an external offer at interview. Professor Schafer received an undisclosed settlement, followed by a £10,000 pay rise (Schafer, 2011; Mills & Reeve LLP, 2012; Chilver, 2018). The decision also acknowledged that the university had since implemented a professorial pay banding system, but it issued no opinion on it, as the change post-dated the claim (Lewis, 2011; Mills & Reeve LLP, 2012).

By June 2011, the Telegraph reported that only 45 universities across the UK had any form of professorial pay banding, one of which was by then Royal Holloway (Ward, 2011). This decision was widely reported as a warning shot to universities up and down the UK; individualised professorial pay without written pay setting policies was no longer acceptable (Schafer, 2011; Ward, 2011; Chilver, 2018). In an interview with Ward (2011), Professor Schafer remarked that "as a result of this case all universities which don't have a system need to get a system very quickly or there will be a whole queue of female professors waiting to take them to tribunal." The extent to which this case has actually led to more transparent professorial pay in UK academia, from the perspective of individual professors, appears to be mixed. A New JNCHES (2015) report asserted that many universities had implemented zones, levels or banding for professors, but it provided no analysis or figures behind that statement. Therefore, one case study university in this thesis has implemented professorial pay banding, while the other has maintained the appearance of individualised pay.

4.3.6 Discussion

The sources of influence that have been described in this section have encouraged institutional transparency (increased visibility and to some degree legitimacy) of pay and pay-related inequality . This has led to some improvement in HE pay inequality. For example, in 2016, at least two UK universities, following internal analysis of their academic pay data, decided to implement targeted pay rises to narrow their GPGs. The London School of Economics commissioned Professor Oriana Bandiera to research the problem. She identified a 10.5% academic GPG, after controlling for experience and research output, with the gap widest amongst more senior academics. The institution then asked HoDs to nominate academics for pay rises based on a consideration for equity, with a steer to focus on women's pay (Bandiera, Rana and Xu, 2016; Havergal, 2016). The University of Essex implemented a pay rise just for professors in 2016, but included all female

professors, in order to immediately bring the average female professorial pay to essential par with the average male level (Grove, 2016b). However, neither of these reforms, perhaps especially the broad-brush solution implemented at Essex[44], addressed the reward or progression policies that led to the formation of the observed GPGs. Acknowledging this, Professor Bandiera's analysis also identified the equal opportunities concern that was apparent in her analysis of the GPG of all academics:

> While women and men at the LSE are promoted to senior lecturer at the same rate, the chances of promotion become significantly more unequal after that. After 10 years at the institution, 35 per cent of men are readers, but only 20 per cent of women are, and, after 15 years, men are more than twice as likely to have become professors; 24 per cent reach the top rung, compared with only 11 per cent of women. (Havergal, 2016)

Concern over a persistent equal opportunity gap across the HE sector has been raised by the THE publication. In 2017, the THE reported that, over the three year period from 2012/13 to 2015/16, the proportion of professorships held by women declined in more than one-third (37%) of the universities that employed at least 150 professors. However, the aggregate proportion of professorships held by women across the HE sector rose from 20% to 23.1% in the same period (Grove, 2017a).

4.4 Summary

This chapter has applied the concepts that were introduced in the previous two literature review chapters to UK academia in order to begin to contextualise the empirical analysis to be undertaken in this thesis. This first section placed HE's pay inequality problem within the language of GPG literature in order to highlight bases of inequality, gender and ethnicity, and indicate problematic organisational processes that reproduce this inequality, particularly promotion and recruitment with respect to vertical segregation, market supplements with respect to horizontal segregation, and the intersection of promotion and maternity leave policies with respect to the motherhood pay penalty in academia.

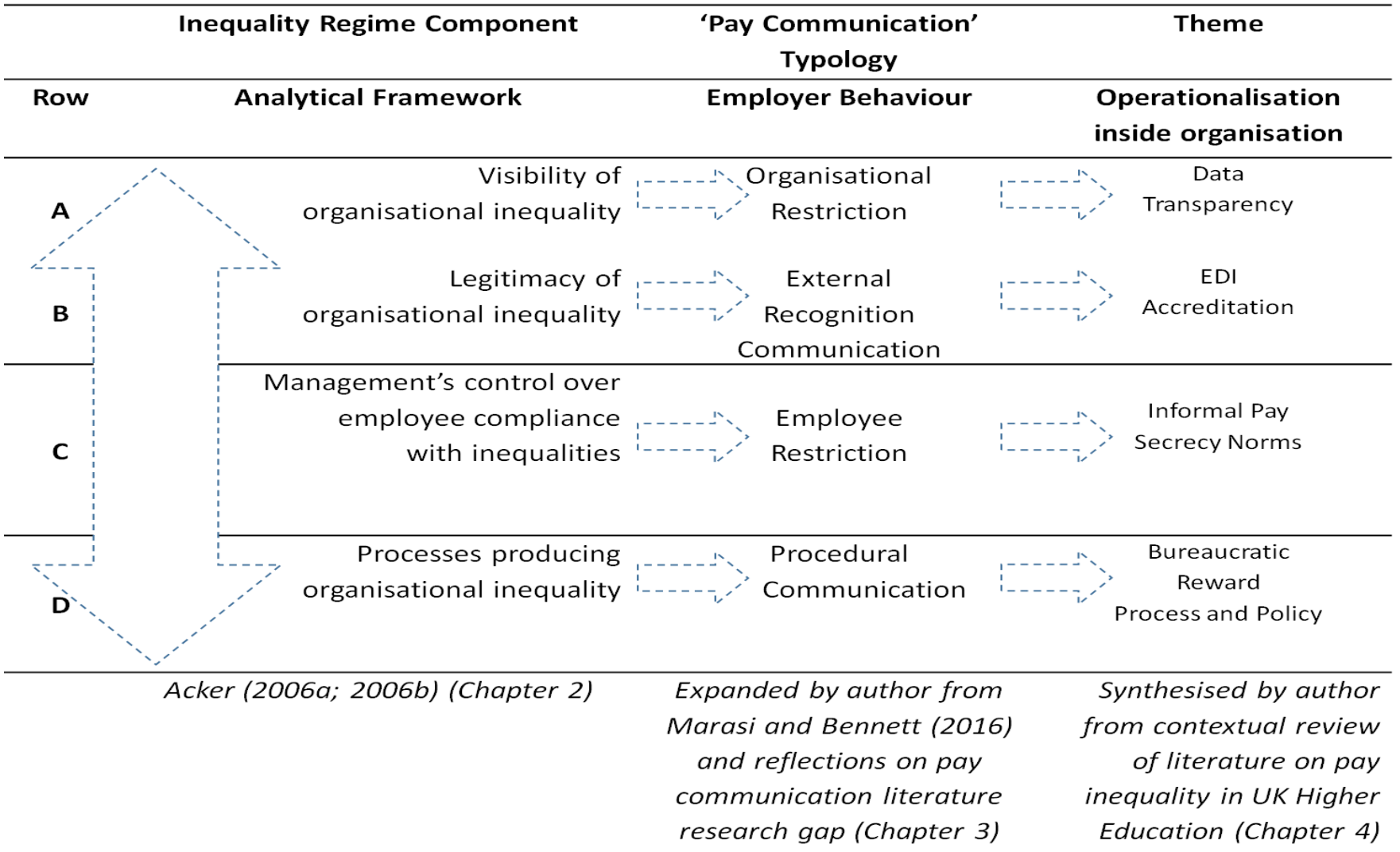
The second section identified multi-layered pay 'transparency agenda' sources that have created pressure on UK university employers to perform pay transparency—and ostensibly to improve individual employee awareness of pay in their organisations and improve equality in the lead up to

[44] However, unpublished analysis demonstrated that the professorial GPG was eliminated in 2016/17 and did not re-emerge for the next two years (Frank, 2019). A knock-on impact on lower academic ranks was also observed, which Frank (2019) attributed to a signalling effect. The VC's transparent decision to raise female professors pay signalled to pay decision-makers, such as deans and heads, that achieving gender equality helps their own career trajectories.

the 2016/17 academic year. Paradoxically, this 'agenda' may solidify power hierarchies that preserve inequality. Pay transparency pressure has led to greater opportunity to make inequalities visible. However, the ostensible appearance of engagement by university senior management, has strengthened legitimacy by indicating that the problem is being resolved, while in some cases, universities may be exacerbating the problem with the 'solution', individualising the experience of disadvantage, and failing to challenge systems that preserve existing hierarchical power.

What has been crucially missing from the academic literature that has been reviewed is how this multi-layered pay 'transparency agenda' pressure is experienced by individual academics who work in universities. With regard to this organisational context, the new 'theme' column of Figure 4-7 has been populated with employer behaviour themes (Rows A-D) that may be seen to operationalise pay communication factors in order to shape the OSE inside universities. Row A indicates that the visibility of inequality, which is impacted by the employer behaviour of organisational restriction, can be operationalised in the HE context by analysing institutional data transparency. Row B indicates that the legitimacy of organisational inequality, which is influenced by the employer behaviour of external recognition communication, can be operationalised in the HE context by analysing EDI accreditation activity. Row C indicates that management's control over employee compliance with inequalities, which is reinforced by the employer behaviour of restricting employee's freedom to discuss their pay, can be operationalised in the HE context with consideration for informal pay secrecy norms. Finally, Row D indicates that processes producing organisational inequality, which are driven by how employers communicate about those procedures, can be operationalised in the HE context with a focus on bureaucratic reward processes and related policies. Chapters 6 and 8 will implement this framework to analyse the OSE inside Universities Alpha and Beta by identifying prominent concepts which emerge through interview data in relation to each of these themes.

Figure 4-7: Operationalising the Thesis Analytical Framework inside an Organisational Context



Academics may themselves be influenced by the societal income-talk taboo but may also exercise their agency to violate this norm at times. This chapter has pointed to the importance of critically analysing the performance of the pay 'transparency agenda' inside institutions from a multi-layered perspective, including elements of reward and progression, as a foundational step toward filling this research gap to better explain the connection between the OSE and the GPG and G/EPG. Therefore, this chapter has led to the remaining two sub-research questions. The first question is: To what effect has the pay 'transparency agenda' been performed in the two university case studies? This will be addressed in Chapter 6. The second question is: How does the pay 'transparency agenda' within UK universities influence awareness of pay (and related progression) inequality by academics, particularly women and BAME academics? This will be addressed in Chapter 8.

Chapter 5 Multi-Layered, Multi-Strategy Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter locates this thesis within a multi-layered, multi-strategy methodological framework. First, the origin and motivation for this study will be justified, with reflexive acknowledgement of my personal, political, and employment experience. Then the research philosophy will be explained to develop the multi-strategy methodology of this thesis. The multi-strategy methods used in this thesis will then be described within the research design, which will be illustrated by a two-part research map that is adapted from Layder (1993, 2013) and a case-study design that draws on Yin (2014). Finally, the specific methods selected to collect data and the primary techniques used to analyse data in this thesis will be described.

5.2 Reflexivity: Political and Employment Influences on the Researcher

Following Silverman (2010), I have adopted a natural history approach to this chapter. This enables me to acknowledge the influence of my personal context as a researcher on the decision to pursue this PhD topic and requires reflexivity. My first paid job was as a hardware store cashier, earning money for university; a colleague gave me real education. She had given up a managerial position elsewhere after learning that several male managers with less experience were making thousands more. Faced with a company ban on discussing pay and no resources to bring legal action, she left the job and economic status that she had worked for years to attain to become a cashier at my store. I grew up exposed to concepts like the gender pay gap (GPG) and discrimination through activism with my mother, school research, and my debate team, but these concepts had always felt abstract. My colleague was real. Her former employer's pay secrecy policy not only obscured potential disparity, it left her feeling powerless to seek remedy when, through social pay comparison, she learned about her low pay.

Prior to beginning my MSc, I worked in a women's suffrage museum, a women's equality charity, and a women's health charity, workplaces that were primarily dominated by white women like me. I likely experienced less overt or covert employment discrimination than many women, especially women of colour. I never felt disadvantaged. However, my perspective as a woman who has worked for organisations that campaign for equal treatment of those who experience inequality based on gender, race, or ethnicity, has led me to question allegedly objective social conventions. Primary among them is the idea that what we earn is private information. Even working in the charity sector, I have felt the cloak of silence over pay. I recall my slightly more senior colleague at a national

women's health charity asking me for advice, in advance of her annual appraisal meeting. Having worked in the organisation for several years, she was hoping to get a promotion and raise, but she did not know how to build a case for her value. How could she learn what others more senior to her were paid in order to create a frame of reference for what was reasonable to request? Was she even supposed to request a raise? In one of the most progressive organisations in America, in a female-dominated workplace, a young woman felt that pay was a concept veiled in secrecy. Our workplace was not unionised. Even though we always contracted with unionised shops where possible, I do not recall anyone ever suggesting that we should unionise.

My MSc dissertation involved speaking with policy activists in the US and UK who had advocated for statutory protections for employees to discuss pay with each other. I did not ask them to make any international comparison, but my interviewees knew which countries I was researching. Several interviewees—on both sides of the pond—believed that people were more open about pay in the other country that I was researching. Several of my MSc classmates spoke to me during informal discussions about how secrecy around pay was, for example, a Dutch thing. Both of these experiences encouraged me to further question the real function of the income talk-taboo, which so many individuals from western cultures seemed to just tacitly accept as 'the way it is.'

My thesis acknowledges a need for reflexivity given my own position as a prospective UK academic and person with UK HE employment experience. Over the course of my PhD, I have become professionally immersed in the HE context in which I was researching, although always as part of the growing precarious workforce (Bryson and Blackwell, 2006; Jones and Oakley, 2018). At Queen Mary University of London, I have worked as an hourly-paid invigilator without a contract, as a research assistant on both fixed-term annualised hours contracts and through one-off payments without a contract, and as a teaching associate and teaching fellow on successive fixed-term, part-time contracts. Therefore, some degree of separation has been maintained. This thesis intentionally focuses on established academics, those holding lectureships through professorships, in order to foster new understanding of the underexplored area of pay secrecy, without the additional complexities of casualisation. However, the line between core and periphery staff (Atkinson, 1985) in HE is becoming increasingly blurred. Some aspects of the experience of casualisation emerged in my data, such as through the experience of a lecturer on a fixed-term contract. My experience of working inside HE has also helped to sharpen my analysis through my practical understanding of terminology in the sector. My experience as a research assistant supporting my department's first

and second Athena SWAN applications also gave me invaluable insight into the enormity of the process, a theme which came clearly through from my interviewees in both case studies.

The research philosophy driving this thesis is embodied within my intersectional feminist approach, which demands a critical assessment of the power behind mundane routines in social organisations. This approach has been especially influenced by Crenshaw (Cho, Crenshaw and McCall, 2013; Carastathis, 2014), Acker (2006a, 2006b) and Layder (1993, 2013). An intersectional feminist understanding encourages my multi-layered approach. My research design emphasises the principle of inclusivity by elevating the individual voices of women and BAME women academic staff (Carastathis, 2014). Allowing intersectional feminism to orient my research is intricately interwoven with my reflexive recognition of how my political beliefs and employment experiences, particularly those within UK HE, have shaped my own critical perspective of work, equality, and power.

5.3 Research Philosophy

5.3.1 Intersectional Feminist Critical Realism

This section embeds my research within a particular philosophical position, namely critical realism (Layder, 1993, 2006, 2013), oriented by intersectional feminism (Cho, Crenshaw and McCall, 2013). Sociological research methodologies run along a continuum; clearly defining where this thesis lies provides guidance for interpreting the findings. At the positivist extreme is Merton's (1967) middle-range theory, which guides research to systematically test precise theory in order to cumulatively advance knowledge, and privileges quantitative data on empirically observable phenomena and deductive inquiry (Layder, 1993). At the interpretivist extreme is Glaser and Strauss's (1967) grounded theory, which guides research to privilege qualitative data within a different kind of systematic inquiry that attempts to generate theory through inductive exploration. The latter criticises the former for pushing investigators toward finding "data to fit the theory rather than to generate theory that fits the data" (Layder, 1993, p. 45). Limiting my inquiry within one of these ideal types would be insufficient to unpick the complex relationship between my conceptualisation of the organisational salary environment (OSE) (Chapter 3) and pay inequality (Chapter 2), particularly due to the lack of quantitative data on social pay comparison behaviour.

Therefore, the philosophical position of this thesis is critical realism, which can be understood as the ontological belief that an objective reality exists, which is independent of human observation, and the epistemological belief that human knowledge of reality is socially constructed. This distinguishes critical realists from positivists, who tend toward the former belief, and social constructivists, who

tend toward the latter (Sayer, 1992; Easton, 2010). Layder (1993, pp. 7–8) explains that "the realist approach attempts to address this complexity by offering a layered or 'stratified' model of society which includes macro (structural, institutional) phenomena as well as the more micro phenomenon of interaction and behaviour."

This thesis also implements Layder's (1993, 2013) social domain theory and adaptive theory methodology. These complement each other. The adaptive approach stimulates the emergence of theory about the relationship between structure and agency, with which social domain theory is primarily concerned. Adaptive theory allows for the 'disciplined flexibility' that is required to ensure the consideration of social reality across the social domains of Layder's (1993, 2013) research map: the self/psychobiography, situated activity, setting, and context. Layder (1993, 2006) argues that recognising ontological distinctions between these domains is essential to understanding how the ontologically distinct concepts of structure and agency and the macro and micro are false dualisms and integrally linked. Therefore, a multi-layered, multi-strategy approach enables the exploration of social pay comparison patterns using quantitative methods and the more nuanced interconnections of social pay comparison behaviour, the societal income-talk taboo and employer 'pay communication' (Marasi and Bennett, 2016) within the OSE using qualitative methods and in relation to the HE pay inequality context.

Layder (1998) also underscores the importance of orienting (or sensitising) concepts to steer such complex research, particularly in its early stages. Intersectional feminism is a key 'orienting concept' for this thesis. 'Intersectionality' was coined by Crenshaw in the 1980s, as an heuristic device to explain the experience of African-American women as distinct from white women or African-American men (Cho, Crenshaw and McCall, 2013). While it is sometimes criticised for tending toward endless sub-divisions of overlapping social categories, intersectionality's foundational raison d'être makes it a logical complement to Layder's concern for breaking down the false dualism of structure and agency. "Intersectionality is inextricably linked to an analysis of power" (Cho, Crenshaw and McCall, 2013, p. 787). Crenshaw emphasised this point in her discussion of structural intersectionality and the necessity for battered women's shelters to consider not only the acute violence that brought a woman to their doors, but also the "multilayered and routinized forms of domination" she may simultaneously face linked to particularly gender, race, and class (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1245). Underscoring the value of intersectionality as an analytical sensibility, Cho, Crenshaw and McCall (2013, p. 789) noted that "intersectionality has travelled into spaces and discourses that are themselves constituted by power relations that are far from transparent." Intersectionality

studies do not sit within a categorically ring-fenced discipline. They adapt to methodologies and fields as appropriate:

> What makes an analysis intersectional—whatever terms it deploys, and whatever its iteration, whatever its field or discipline—is its adoption of an intersectional way of thinking about the problem of sameness and difference and its relation to power. This framing—conceiving of categories as not distinct, always in the process of creating and being created by dynamics of power—emphasizes what intersectionality does rather than what intersectionality is. (Cho, Crenshaw and McCall, 2013, p. 795)

Cho, Crenshaw and McCall (2013) identified three themes of intersectional studies, acknowledging that some studies may overlap these categories. The themes included those that consider social processes, like labour market experience, through an intersectional analytical framework; those that take discursive explorations into intersectionality as a methodology and a theory; and those that seek to turn academic theorizing and analysis of intersectionality into practical change (Cho, Crenshaw and McCall, 2013). This thesis overlaps the first and third themes. It contributes the OSE as an original intersectional analytical framework to explain the organisational processes that contribute to the persistence of gender and ethnic-based pay inequality, and develops plans to report those findings within the HE sector and in the broader policy arena. This aims to reinforce with empirical analysis what activist groups like the UK's Women's Equality Party (2017) and the Fawcett Society (2019) already argue: perfunctory pay transparency is insufficient to address deeply embedded workplace inequality.

5.3.2 Ontology

The ontological position adopted within this thesis best aligns with critical realism in terms of believing that an objective reality exists. The pay, bonuses, and promotion decisions that stimulate or stifle academic careers, and the policies that are intended to guide those decisions, are objective reality. The policies can be read, and the decisions can be recorded in HR databases. Academics objectively experience the results of these decisions through their bank accounts. This thesis also follows Woodhams and Lupton's (2014) prescription to use a critical realist ontological understanding of difference, drawing on pre-existing categories (ethnicity and sex) to drive analysis. This, combined with the multi-strategy method in this thesis, strengthens the prospect of achieving practical impact because the results can be framed in equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) language to which management is accustomed.

5.3.3 Epistemology

The epistemological position within this thesis also aligns best with critical realism, in terms of the belief that although an objective reality exists, our knowledge of that reality is socially constructed.

That is why it was important to include a range of voices across the two case study institutions, which included remuneration policy shapers, union representatives, and academics. The intentional mixture of academic interviewees by their gender, ethnicity, and position within the academic hierarchy makes this thesis also emancipatory by amplifying the voices of women, BAME academics, and BAME women academics, in order to challenge the "hegemonic structures by increasing the visibility and illegitimacy of 'inequality regimes'" (Özbilgin, 2009, p. 2) inside academia. Consistent with Marks and O'Mahoney's (2014) caveats of the implications of critical realism for data collection, these interviews sought to record more than just recalled conversations, but also to collect biographical information about the interviewees and other individuals whose experiences they sometimes also described, as well as structural information (particularly policy documents concerning pay and related progression practices). Multi-layered data collection throughout this thesis further enabled a critical consideration of the interrelations of different strata of analyses, from the individual to the total political/economic system. Here, the thesis's central research questions align with Easton's (2010, p. 123) prescription that critical realism calls the researcher to question:

> 'What caused the events associated with the phenomenon to occur?'…It is only possible to understand social phenomenon by recording and analysing the associated events that take place as a result of the actors acting…The events can be recorded live or exist in records of the past including the memories of those human actors who can attest to the events.

In answering the research questions, this thesis provides an 'explanatory critique' (Bhaskar, 1989) of pay and related progression practices inside UK academia. There is a commonly-held belief that such processes are transparent, owing to the performance of the pay 'transparency agenda.' This thesis aims to explain the power dynamics that reinforce that belief, whilst revealing the contrasting experiences of women, BAME academics, and BAME women academics. Thus, this intersectional feminist thesis aligns with New's (2003) guidance that critical realism is valuable for feminist research.

5.3.4 Methodology

The primary principle driving the selection of methods in this thesis is a multi-strategy approach. "Methods or strategies of data collection are adopted and used in order to throw light on specific problems or topics, rather than because of some predetermined commitment to specific methods or type of data (qualitative or quantitative) as representing the 'best way' of approaching a topic or tackling a problem" (Layder, 2013, p. 70). This is not a licence to employ methods without regard for previous literature or established best practices. Rather, it indicates 'disciplined flexibility' (Layder,

1993). This approach has some similarities to the more mainstream concept of 'triangulation' (Denzin, 1970), which encourages the use of multiple methods and data sources to reinforce an initial finding (Yin, 2014). However, the 'disciplined flexibility' of the multi-strategy approach goes beyond triangulation, to improve research validity. The approach allows for flexibility in the research design, in order to respond to analytical problems that arise from the data and to achieve a more robust understanding of reality through a "density of analytic and empirical coverage" (Layder, 1993, p. 123). This is demonstrated in this thesis. An original social pay comparison survey is implemented because such data did not exist. Analysis of this quantitative data suggests concerns about the role of the income-talk taboo inside the case studies, but these concerns require validation through qualitative conversations with academic staff about their pay discussions and other social interactions at work. Interviews with multiple types of actors also enable the consideration of multiple and complementary perspectives of the same phenomenon to help strengthen study conclusions.

This multi-strategy methodological approach aligns with the adoption of Layder's (1993, 2013) social domain and adaptive theories, and it is consistent with critical realism (Layder, 1993, 2006, 2013). The methodology of this thesis enables a clearer understanding of "the multifaceted nature of the empirical world" (Layder, 1993, p. 7), by recognising the inextricable links between the layers of social organisation to overcome the unhelpful division between micro and macro analysis. Understanding social reality as an amalgam of overlapping and interwoven layers, allows this thesis to detect units of analysis and timescales that relate to social organisation and change (Layder, 1993). This is consistent with the intersectional feminist orienting concept, emphasising the structural and multi-layered complexity of power and inequality (Crenshaw, 1991; Cho, Crenshaw and McCall, 2013). These methodological principles, influenced by Acker's (2006a, 2006b) inequality regime foundation to the analytical framework, enable this thesis to critically explain the invisible, embedded mechanisms that create, preserve, and reinforce inequality in the workplace.

This thesis has been designed using Layder's (1993) research map, which contains four social domains or research elements. Each is distinct, interdependent, and integrally connected with social activity and organisation. Understanding the micro-experiences of daily life at the level of situated activity and psychobiography/self, requires sight of the meso-setting environments and macro contextual factors. While the social domains are interrelated, the research map provides a tool to explain the separate scrutiny that is required for analytical purposes (Layder, 1993). Table 5-1 demonstrates how Layder (2006, p. 274) layers the social domains to acknowledge their

interconnection “through social relations of power which are also stretched out over time and space.”

Table 5-1: Layering of Layder’s Social Domains Research Map and Power over Time and Space

History

Research Elements	Research Focus
Context/Contextual Resources	Macro social organisation • Values, traditions • Social, economic, legal organisation and power relations • Class, gender, race relations
Setting/Social Settings	Intermediate environment of the social activity/social organisation • Work: industrial bureaucracies, labour markets, • Non-Work: family, school, religion, leisure
Situated Activity	Social activity • Dynamics of face-to-face interaction • Focus on emergent meanings, understanding, and definitions of situation as these affect and are affected by contexts and settings (above) and subjective dispositions of individuals (below)
Self/Psychobiography	Self Identity and Individual’s Social Experience • Biographical experience and social involvements • These are influenced by the above social domains and interact with the unique psychobiography of the individual

Relations of power

Stretched across time and space

Source: (Layder, 1993, p. 72, 2006, p. 273)

The following briefly describes how separate scrutiny of the social domains for analytical purposes applies to this thesis:

1. **Context/Contextual Resources**: This refers to the broadest macro level social organisation, which is removed from the individual’s direct experience. In this thesis, the contextual analysis explores the HE sector, by considering the gender and ethnic-based pay gap experienced by the UK’s academic workforce and the pay “transparency agenda” pressure that has been exerted on the sector.
2. **Setting/Social Settings:** This refers to the social organisation at the meso or intermediate level of analysis, which is the specific area in which the situated activity occurs. In this thesis, the setting/social settings are two university case studies.
3. **Situated Activity:** This refers to the emergent meanings of the social interactions that are observed or recalled. In this thesis, these interactions involve academics, the union committee and senior management at two case study universities, focusing particularly on reports of interaction concerning pay and progression.
4. **Self/Psychobiography:** This describes how an individual experiences and engages with their social surroundings. An individual’s perceptions in this domain are read through their own

personal experiences, social connections, and identity. This research concerns the self/psychobiography of academics who work in two case study universities.

The prior history and social relations of power interact with the functioning of all four social domains over time. Layder (1993, 2006) incorporated social relations of power into this multi-layered framework out of recognition that power and control are housed within the social domains and may influence other social domains. Structural power may be built into the context or settings in which situated activity occurs, and it may be subtle. Therefore, analysis at one or two social domains may be blind to important power relations flowing from another domain. Concluding that a company is transparent because at the level of setting the organisation has pay banding, would overlook the subtle structural power observed at the level of self by staff, manifested in staff reports that their line-managers reacted with disbelief when they raised pay inequality concerns. This reported disbelief is predicated on the existence of 'transparent' pay bands.

5.4 Research Design

5.4.1 Research Strategy

The research strategy and design has been iteratively moulded throughout the research process to arrive at appropriate methods to answer the research questions. Layder's research map provides an heuristic tool for the "planning and ongoing formulation of field research which has theory generation as its primary aim" (Layder, 1993, p. 73). I have adapted this map to help create and explain the research design, which enabled a critical assessment of the relationship between my original OSE conceptualisation and pay inequality, by conducting analysis at different levels of social organisation.

The failure of decomposition analysis to fully explain the complex GPG and more complex intersectional G/EPG (Chapter 2), justifies the multi-layered, multi-strategy approach adopted in this thesis (Whitehouse, 2003). The OSE has been constructed in this thesis as a promising lens through which to understand the persistence of unexplained pay inequality in the UK's HE sector (Chapter 4). The employer 'pay communication' policy component of the OSE has been the focus of recent research, with the suggestion made that more transparent policies help to minimise inequality based on ethnicity and gender, while secretive policies may have the reverse impact (Hegewisch and Williams, 2014; Lytle, 2014; Marasi and Bennett, 2016).

Identifying what proportion of the GPG or intersectional G/EPG can be attributed to 'pay communication' in the OSE, as a decomposition analysis could potentially achieve, goes beyond the

scope of this thesis. This is partly due to the absence of variables to measure 'pay communication' policies (or social pay comparison behaviour) in the existing datasets that are considered to be the most valid measures of UK wage levels, the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) (Leaker, 2008). More importantly, this limitation is also due to my ontological suspicion of the veil of secrecy over pay as part of a complex phenomenon, driven and shaped by institutional formal and informal policies, broader societal norms, and individual interactions—the OSE. Measuring this phenomenon in quantitative terms at this early stage in conceptual development, would be premature and possibly never advisable in isolation.

> The complex nature of gender pay inequality precludes comprehensive analysis from any single perspective or method. For example, quantitative methods that rely on aggregate data and focus only on factors that can be represented numerically reveal nothing about the organisational and historical processes that underpin the perpetuation of the gender pay gap. Unseen within such analysis are factors such as organisational barriers, sex segregation at the level of specific jobs, the processes through which undervaluation of 'female' skills occurs, and inequalities in bargaining power. (Whitehouse, 2003, p. 125)

This thesis illuminates the potential role of transparency as something that paradoxically silently hides inequality from scrutiny. This dynamic is supported by an anti-discrimination legal regime that requires any alleged victim to first bring a claim in order to have his or her rights protected. Such a system requires the victim to have the financial and legal resources to bring a claim, or at the very least to have some indication that discrimination that warrants a claim has occurred. UK employment anti-discrimination protections remain individualised, without recourse to representative remedy (Dickens, 2000). "Representative (the term used in the UK) or class (used in the US) actions are essentially the same and can be taken where a group of people with the same common legal interest collectively bring a claim to a tribunal or court" (Gow and Middlemiss, 2012, p. 179). In 2008, the Civil Justice Council of England and Wales issued a report, 'Improving Access to Justice through Collective Action', to the UK's Lord Chancellor[45], which along with earlier European Union (EU) anti-competition legal pressure, pushed the UK government to consider generic reform to allow collective legal claims (Mulheron, 2017). The Trades Union Congress has called on government, largely in vain, to specifically enable employment tribunals to provide representative action remedy (Fawcett Society, 2010). Despite these entreaties, government has taken a restricted approach to reform, so far only greenlighting the Consumer Rights Act 2015, which allows "opt-out

[45] The Lord Chancellor is the member of the prime minister's cabinet charged with upholding the rule of law across the government (Horne, 2015).

class action which is aimed at facilitating private actions for anti-competitive conduct" (Mulheron, 2017, p. 815).[46]

Contrastingly, the government chose to raise barriers to bringing an individual employment tribunal claim by imposing fees in 2013 (Pyper, McGuinness and Brown, 2017) and revoking the statutory Equal Pay Questionnaire in 2014 (Trades Union Congress, 2015b; Wild, 2017). Following significant advocacy, led by the trade union UNISON, against the employment tribunal fees that restricted access to justice, the UK's Supreme Court forced the government to revoke the fees in July 2017 (BBC, 2017). Discussing pay with colleagues, which is protected by the UK's Equality Act 2010 when illegal discrimination is suspected (HM Government, 2010), could provide a useful point of reference for employees with existing pay concerns.

Consequently, this thesis has applied a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods as appropriate. The research philosophy and methodological principles described earlier in this chapter provide a rationale for critical analysis of the pay 'transparency agenda' in this thesis, through the lens of power and privilege and a recognition that embedded workplace practices, which are presented as impartial, may reproduce inequality (Layder, 1993; Acker, 2006b). Orientation by intersectional feminism connotes an understanding that the OSE and pay inequality are generated through multiple layers of context, in which access to power may be linked to unseen practices of gender and ethnicity, which should be made visible. Details of the research design and how it has been developed through my adapted research map will be provided next.

5.4.2 Design Process

Consistent with the natural history approach to the methodology developed in this thesis (Silverman, 2010), the research process has required iterative and dynamic flexibility. This is particularly applicable given the research focus on the income-talk taboo, which was often acknowledged but seldom critically analysed prior to this thesis. This thesis has followed the orthodox steps of conducting a literature review, establishing a methodology and research design, conducting fieldwork, analysing data, and writing up the results. However, this process has been characterised by flexibility, such as incorporating new literature at multiple points and revising methods based on limited availability of secondary data and the practicality of data collection, which has been essential to successful completion. Rarely is quality research a strictly linear process (Silverman, 2010). At the outset of my PhD, my aim was to compare the income-talk taboo

[46] Large, essentially collective claims have been accepted in equal value cases, such as Abdulla v. Birmingham City Council (2013), but through grouping of individual claims (Deakin *et al.*, 2015).

adherence across four countries. However, this developed organically through a flexible process of reflection that led to a narrower but richer embedded (multiple units of analysis) multi-case analysis of the OSE inside two universities, in the context of the UK HE sector.

5.4.3 Research Map

My two-part research map has been adapted from Layder's (1993) research map and Acker's (2006a, 2006b) inequality regimes. This helped to rationalise and explain the different analyses, conducted at different levels of social organisation and with different units of analysis, as part of the cohesive investigation in my thesis. Addressing the investigation at different levels is required for this exploratory research on the OSE and pay inequality, which are influenced by complex, multi-layered factors. I have used relevant theories and concepts, which have been discussed in greater detail in my literature review chapters**,** such as social pay comparison and the income-talk taboo. Of broad applicability to this thesis is Acker's (2006a, 2006b) inequality regimes, which aligns with Layder's (1993, 2013) social domain and adaptive theory, to develop my research map.

Answering my research questions requires interrogating issues of privilege and workplace power relations, which lends itself to using Acker's (2006b) inequality regimes with an organisational focus, alongside Layder's (1993, p. 170) "integration of macro and micro levels of analysis", to place the organisational analysis within a broader context. This links quantitative and qualitative analysis in order to illustrate the subtle functioning of inequality regimes through the examination of employer practices and employee behaviour, which are influenced by social norms (Hokema and Scherger, 2016). The relationship between the OSE and pay inequality is best understood through a comprehensive analysis, which includes the sectoral labour market context and the organisational setting, alongside social interactions and individual experiences. Table 5-2 and Table 5-3 summarise the research map adopted in this study at each social domain, including the research elements, the respective research focus and objectives, the key methods adopted, and the related theoretical influences.

Table 5-2: Research Map (First Half): Context and Setting

HISTORY: Equal Pay Act 2010 (mandatory gender pay gap reporting regulations)

Research Element	Research Focus and Objectives	Key Methods	Theoretical Influences
Context/Contextual Resources (Chapter 4)	Focus: • Macro/sectoral-level social organisation • Aggregate gender and gender/ethnic pay gaps of full-time UK academic staff Research Objective: • To describe gender and gender/ethnic pay inequality trends in UK HE and review the explanations for the inequality in the sector, along with identifying historical pay transparency pressure on the sector, thus providing a justification for the research focus	• Secondary quantitative data analysis – descriptive statistics (Higher Education Statistics Agency data, Times Higher Education Pay Survey) • Review of academic and grey literature on HE pay inequality and multi-layered sources of pressure on the sector to perform transparency	• Inequality Regime Theory (Degree of Inequality) • Intersectional Feminism Theories • Human Capital Theory • Occupational Segregation Theories • Preference Theory
Setting/Social Settings (Chapter 6)	Focus: • Meso/intermediate-level social organization • Two research-intensive universities in Southeast England Research Objective: • To critically describe the apparent bureaucratic functionality of pay and progression policies within each case study university	• Thematic Analysis of semi-structured interviews with remuneration policy influencers and UCU committee reps • Critical comparison of interview transcripts and remuneration-related policy documents	• Inequality Regime Theory (Visibility and Legitimacy of Inequality) • Intersectional Feminism

Source: Adapted by author from: (Layder, 1993, p. 72)

The contribution of this thesis began at the social domain of the 'context', with a macro level quantitative focus on pay inequality based on gender and ethnicity in UK HE. The objective of this research was to describe pay inequality by gender and ethnicity over time within UK academia, whilst also reviewing academic explanations for this inequality in the sector. The elusive resolution of pay inequality in academia, despite many pressures on the sector to ensure that pay is transparent, justifies further exploration of this sector. This particularly aims to pre-empt questions as to why a more obviously secretive industry, such as financial services, was not selected. Additionally, identifying the historical multi-layered pressures on the sector to perform pay transparency is relevant to the broader social context that 'pay transparency' action by employers has become a bold rhetorical tool in UK politics over the period of the analysis (Chapter 1). This tool allows employers to present the impression of fighting against pay discrimination and promoting equal opportunities, specifically based on gender. This contextual analysis discussion is influenced by theories of intersectional feminism, human capital, occupational segregation, and preference. This contribution has been presented in Chapter 4.

Moving on to the 'social setting' social domain, this thesis takes a meso level quantitative focus on the intermediate social organisation of the work setting. The work setting selected is working in academia (teaching and/or research), within two research intensive universities in the South East of England. The research objective is to describe the apparent bureaucratic functionality of pay and progression policies within each case study university. A critical discussion of these apparently objective policies is influenced by intersectional feminist theories and inequality regime theory. This analysis is done through the thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with remuneration shapers and University and College Union (UCU) committee representatives, in addition to remuneration-related policy documents published by the two case study institutions. This contribution is presented in Chapter 6.

Table 5-3: Research Map (Second Half): Situated Activity and Self

HISTORY: Equal Pay Act 2010 (mandatory gender pay gap reporting regulations)

Research Element	Research Focus and Objectives	Key Methods	Theoretical Influences
Situated Activity (Chapter 7)	Focus: • Social Activity • Social Pay Comparison Behaviour (and its absence) Research Objective: • To illustrate and analyse patterns of social pay comparison amongst UK-based academics	• Binomial logistic regression model using data from Qualtrics survey on social pay comparison behaviour; open to all academics in Universities Alpha and Beta	• Inequality Regime Theory (Visibility of Inequality) • Intersectional Feminism • Social Pay Comparison
Self/Psychobiography (Chapter 8)	Focus: • Self-Identity and Individual's Social Experience Research Objectives: • To identify the motivations and contexts within which academics do and do not discuss their pay at work and with whom (social interaction within the workplace and with colleagues/friends outside the workplace) • To explore the views and stories of academics about organisational salary environment in their workplace, which includes elements of both pay (explicit) and progression (implicit)	• Thematic Analysis of semi-structured interviews with academic staff • Critical comparison of interview transcript and remuneration-related policy documents	• Inequality Regime Theory (Management's control over employee compliance with inequalities and Processes that produce organisational inequality) • Intersectional Feminism • Social Pay Comparison

Source: Adapted by author from: (Layder, 1993, p. 72)

The situated activity social domain begins my micro level analysis, with a focus specifically on social pay comparison behaviour (and absence of this behaviour), as reported by academics who worked inside the case studies. The research objective is to illustrate and analyse patterns of social pay comparison amongst the academics, which is influenced by social pay comparison theories. This is done through analysing data from my original Qualtrics online survey. From my critical realist perspective, considering why social pay comparison happens and does not happen is particularly salient because "critical realists also believe that the non-occurrence of an event when one is expected not only requires explanation but may also provide very useful insights" (Easton, 2010, p. 120). This analysis is influenced by my semi-structured interviews with academics, as well as by limited social pay comparison research, intersectional feminist theories, and inequality regimes. These situated activities are discussed in terms of how the macro and meso level socio-economic context may influence them, and how they may in turn influence feelings of self-identity and power within the workplace. This contribution is presented in Chapter 7.

Lastly, the social domain of the self will conclude my micro level analysis, with a focus on self-identity and social interaction of academics, which is influenced by intersectional feminism and inequality regimes. Consistent with this approach, all participants were asked to identify their own ethnicity and gender. This makes use of my semi-structured interviews with academics, during which much time was invested in discussing individuals' personal experiences interacting with pay and progression policies and in particular, their perceptions of fairness and transparency of these processes. These self-identities help to explain the described 'situated activities' of social pay comparison (or absence thereof) in the two case study 'settings' of this thesis. This contribution is presented in Chapter 8.

5.4.4 Institutional Access

Prior to embarking upon any fieldwork, I secured institutional access to the two case study institutions. This required written communication with the appropriate member of senior management at both institutions. Access was granted under the condition that no outputs of this thesis would identify the universities. They will be referred to throughout as two research-intensive universities in the South East of England. All possible efforts have been taken to honour this agreement, particularly when describing the aspects of the institutions that are critical to the analysis and referring to publicly available documentation about them. To maintain this confidentiality, no direct quotations from these public documents were used. At the time of securing institutional access, I was not, nor had I ever been, a member of academic staff in either

case study. Therefore, securing access involved presenting myself as a trustworthy and ethical researcher to the relevant gatekeepers, whose trust I deeply appreciate.

5.4.5 Ethics, Confidentiality, and Anonymity

Consistent with my agreement not to identify my case study universities, all individuals who responded to my survey and whom I interviewed were given similar assurances of anonymity and confidentiality.[47] The universities are referred to as Universities Alpha and Beta throughout this thesis, which will be maintained in any resulting publications. The institutions are characterised as research intensive universities in the South East of England out of recognition that the research-intensive label and geographic proximity to London are important factors influencing pay and job competition, which could in turn influence the OSE. This balances a need for analytical clarity, particularly regarding the case study selection process, with the overarching importance of honouring confidentiality and my ethical commitment. In a similar vein, details of the research sites and interviewees are included only where appropriate to the analysis in order to avoid unnecessary identification risk. Care has been taken in the reporting of all survey data and interview feedback to maintain this ethical commitment, such as by removing all references to specific names, departments and programme titles from any interview quotations reported in the analysis.

Another critical balance has had to be struck between the academic standard of retrievability and maintaining a chain of evidence in case study research, alongside the overarching importance of honouring confidentiality and my ethical commitment. Since documents used in these case study analyses may still be publicly available online, formally citing them would immediately violate my ethical commitment not to identify the universities, and in some cases, identify interviewees. While I have maintained a private database of these documents for personal use and can discuss the categories of documents, following the advice of the American Psychological Association, I omit quotations and citations of these publicly available documents. “Subject privacy…should never be sacrificed for clinical or scientific accuracy” (Lee and Hume-Pratuch, 2013).

This PhD study was given ethical approval by the Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee (Reference Number: QMERC2016/51) prior to the commencement of any fieldwork. All updates and material requested have been provided to the committee as appropriate.

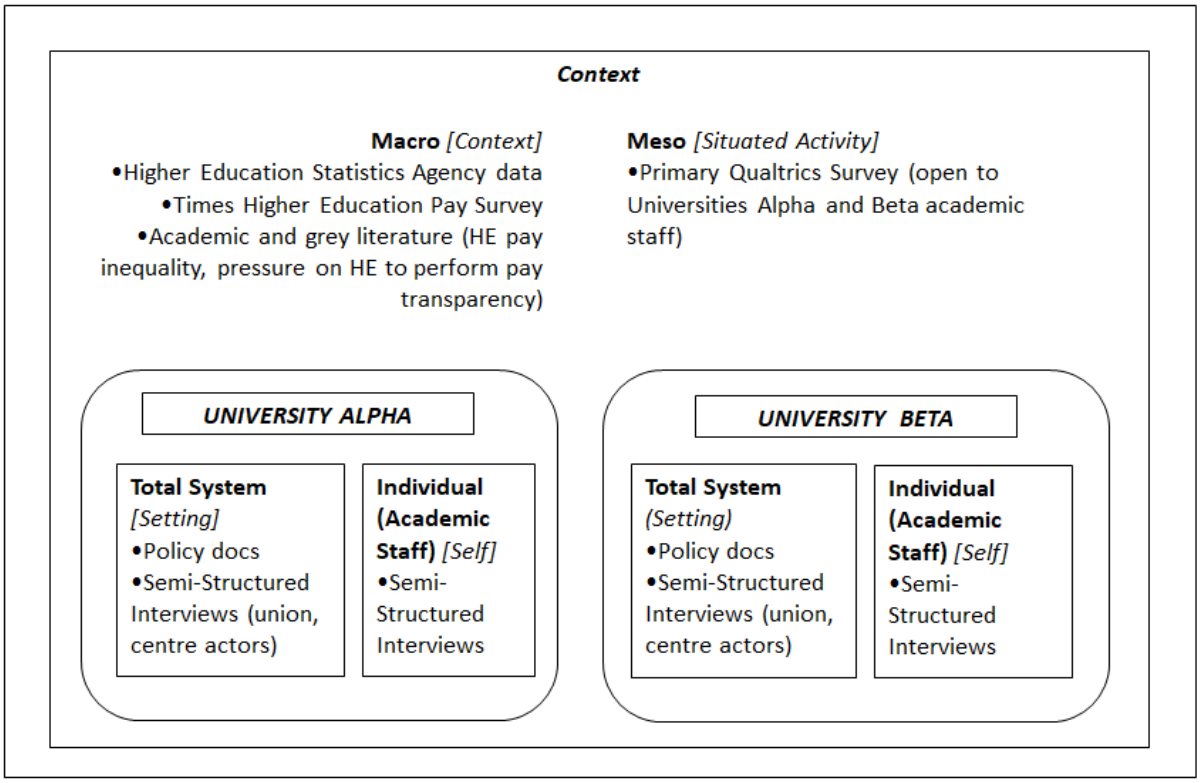
[47] See Appendix B for the consent information that was provided to all potential survey respondents and Appendix C for the informed consent form signed by all interviewees.

5.4.6 Embedded (Multiple Units of Analysis) Multiple-Case Design

The paradox between the income-talk taboo and the growing recognition by the UK government that pay transparency is an important weapon in the battle against pay inequality and discrimination, helps to establish the relevant 'context' of the case study design, namely the UK's HE sector, which has been described in Chapter 4. The OSE for academic pay ought to be fairly transparent because the pressures to perform the pay 'transparency agenda' are long-standing. Despite the introduction of various policies, regulations and schemes, the HE sector continues to struggle with a persistent GPG, pay secrecy and a lack of transparency, as highlighted in Chapter 4 by Professor Schafer's employment tribunal claim against Royal Holloway (Ward, 2011).

With this context in mind, using a case study design is consistent with the critical realist approach, which is "particularly well suited to relatively clearly bounded, but complex phenomena, such as organisations" (Easton, 2010, p. 123). This thesis specifically employs an embedded (multiple units of analysis) multiple-case design, where analysis takes place at the total system and the individual level, as shown in Figure 5-1 (Yin, 2014). Using an embedded design is consistent with the principles of Layder's (1993, 2013) social domain theory and adaptive theory methodology. The design is multiple-case, using two research sites that have been selected as cases, which strengthens analysis and reduces vulnerability to claims of uniqueness (Yin, 2014). This design benefits from the complementarity of qualitative and quantitative data, which Yin (2014, p. 67) notes can "address broader or more complicated research questions than case studies alone."

Figure 5-1: Research Design: Embedded (Multiple Units of Analysis) Multiple-Case Design



Source: Adapted by author from **(Layder, 1993, p. 72; Yin, 2014, p. 50)**

Using Layder's (1993, 2006) terminology, comparing and contrasting analyses of the two separate case studies will be located at the level of:

- **Context:** This is to justify the focus on UK HE by demonstrating its pay inequality trends over time, despite multi-layered pressure on the sector to perform pay transparency.
- **Setting**: This is to create an understanding of the remuneration policy influencer (employer) and UCU committee members (union) perspectives of the OSE and policies that may shape it, based especially on semi-structured interviews with employer and union representatives and remuneration-related policy documents.
- **Situated Activity**: This is to help critical narratives emerge to explain why social pay comparison happens (or does not happen), to be considered using the quantitative analysis of this behaviour in my primary Qualtrics survey.
- **Self:** This is based on semi-structured interviews with academics to draw out how gender and ethnicity interact with the individual experience and perception of the OSE and fairness (employee perspectives).

The two case studies have been selected based on the concept of replication logic. Literal and theoretical replication logics are the acceptable logics for the selection of case studies in a multiple case study design. Literal replication means that the cases are expected to yield similar outcomes and theoretical replication means that the cases are expected to yield different outcomes (Yin, 2014). Theoretical replication logic has been used for the selection of the cases in this thesis. Both institutions share the traits that make UK academia a promising industry for this research; namely, they are public UK universities with recognised UCU branches, participate in the sectoral collective bargaining agreement for pay, have responsibilities under the PSED, and have their GPG reported by the THE pay survey (Chapter 4). In addition, being self-proclaimed research-intensive universities and having a geographic proximity to London could be important factors that might influence pay and job competition, which could in turn influence the OSE. Therefore, two universities that shared these traits were selected as a way of controlling for them within the analysis.

It was impossible to know how to characterise the OSE in these two case studies prior to conducting this research. However, these universities differed in a key structural manner which, consistent with the argument that the presence of collective bargaining should make pay more transparent, could have been expected to create a more open OSE in University Alpha. University Alpha had implemented professorial pay banding prior to the 2016/17 academic year, whilst professorial pay at University Beta remained a black box without any sort of pay banding structure communicated to staff.

5.5 Selected Methods

Building upon the philosophical principles and the research strategy adopted in my thesis, this section will illustrate the research methods that have been selected and how the fieldwork has been conducted. As discussed in the research strategy, this thesis adopts Layder's (1993) multi-strategy approach of 'disciplined flexibility.' This privileges the use of multi-strategy methods, acknowledging the strength afforded to research by approaching an investigation of social reality from the macro, meso, and micro levels and by using quantitative data to complement qualitative data. This will enable a comprehensive analysis of the social domains in order to make visible the invisible structural and social power relations that reinforce gender and ethnicity-based inequality. This is consistent with the critical realist position of this thesis that there is an objective reality, which is understood through the social construction of experiences. Easton (2010) argues that critical realism enables the understanding of a social phenomenon through analysing machine records (i.e. pay data, policy documents) and human memories (i.e. survey and interview data) about events

associated with the phenomenon. In this thesis, such events include things like pay, social pay comparison behaviour, EDI data reporting, and recruitment and promotion pay decision experiences. Why and how data and methods have been selected and implemented will now be elaborated.

5.5.1 Secondary Data Collection

The following briefly describes the secondary datasets that are analysed in this thesis.

5.5.1.1 Higher Education Statistics Agency

HESA data is the most reliable source of data on UK university staff. HESA is a charitable body set up in 1993 by statute to help higher education institutions (HEIs) fulfil their 1992 Higher and Further Education Act data reporting requirements to entities including the UK government and funding councils. The body is charged with collecting, analysing, and disseminating data on UK HE. These data are 'official statistics' that are regulated by the UK Statistics Agency. The HESA Staff Record contains data on the characteristics of all academic and non-academic staff who are employed by a reporting HEI in the UK, including their salaries. There were 163 HEIs in 2015/16, the final year of data analysed in this thesis. The HESA Staff Record reporting period runs August 1 through July 31 of each academic year (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2019b).

Although limited data is public online through a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2019a), the raw data is controlled. Academic pay data in this thesis has been kindly granted by HESA, in association with Professor Geraldine Healy (Queen Mary University of London) and Professor Almudena Sevilla (University College London), who purchased access for a separate research project. HESA provided the raw data in two files, one for 2003/04-2011/12 and one for 2012/13-2015/16. Thanks are also due to Danula Gamage, my fellow PhD researcher at Queen Mary University of London, who invested considerable effort in merging and cleaning the data for his use, with quality-checking support from me prior to analysis of the complete dataset. Data presentation in this thesis complies with the HESA Services Standard Rounding Methodology.[48]

5.5.1.2 Times Higher Education Pay Survey

The THE Pay Survey is an annual publication that reports the mean salaries of male and female full-time academics in the UK by institution. Publications from 2007 to 2017 are used in this thesis, covering data from the academic years 2005/06 through 2015/16. Nearly all public universities are

[48] This HESA requirement is detailed in our access agreement. Requirements relate to headcounts, full-person equivalent and full-time equivalent data.

included in the reports, including the two case study universities. The figures come from analysis of the HESA Staff Records. This analysis has been published annually since at least 2007 (Chapter 4). In 2007, these figures were only reported for all full-time male and female academics, without disaggregating by any levels within academia (Fearn and Newman, 2007). Varying additional sub-divisions were presented in the 2008 through 2017 publications. However, the mean salary for all full-time male and female academics has been consistently reported since 2007. The mean salary for full-time male and female professors has also been consistently reported since 2008. These two metrics are used to analyse THE Pay Survey in Chapter 6 (Fearn and Newman, 2007, 2008; Fearn, 2009; Morgan and Fearn, 2010; Morgan, 2011a; Times Higher Education, 2012; Grove, 2013a, 2014, 2015b, 2016a, 2017b).

5.5.2 Secondary Data Analysis

This section describes the key methods used to analyse secondary data in this thesis. Conducting secondary data analysis, particularly making use of government official statistics, as a background resource was suggested by Layder (2013, pp. 97–98) as a "useful platform on which to develop ideas, particularly about settings and contexts of specific social activities." As illustrated by my adapted research map presented earlier in this chapter, secondary data analysis provides information about the context in which the research has been conducted.

5.5.2.1 Descriptive Analysis of the Gender Pay Gap in UK Academia and Case Study Institutions

This descriptive analysis provides sectoral context using the unadjusted GPG and G/EPG for UK HE. HE pay and workforce composition analyses uses the HESA data directly (Chapters 4 and 6).[49] Analysis of the two case study universities uses THE pay survey (Chapter 6). Drawing on Acker's (2006b) inequality regimes, the bases of inequality, gender and ethnicity, are used to assess the shape and degree of wage inequality. Acker (2006a, 2006b) endorsed using aggregate data for this purpose, acknowledging the interrelation between workplace and societal inequalities. All of the aggregate pay gaps are calculated for this thesis in a consistent manner; whether mean or median figures are used will be stated in any analysis provided:

- Pay gap % = [1 - (mean hourly/annual pay of expected disadvantage group/mean hourly/annual pay of expected advantaged group)] * 100
- If the mean hourly pay of women was £81/hour and the mean hourly pay of men was £100/hour, the GPG would be 19%, calculated as:

[49] See Appendix D for for details of the variables that were used to directly and indirectly conduct the HESA pay gap analysis presented in this thesis (Chapter 4).

- [1-(81/100)]*100 ➔ [1-0.81]*100 ➔ 0.19*100 ➔ 19%

This analysis cannot generate any connections between the gaps and the cloak of pay secrecy or employee pay discussion behaviour. Apart from the dated and regionally-specific Social Change and Economic Life Initiative data used by Burchell and Yagil (1997), no more recent data measuring employee social pay comparison behaviour could be identified (Chapter 2). For this reason, this chapter will next describe the primary data collection for this thesis, beginning with running an original Qualtrics survey to generate data on social pay comparison by academics.

5.5.3 Primary Data Collection

The following section details the primary data sources that I have collected for analysis in this thesis, which include survey data, semi-structured interviews, and remuneration-related policy documents from both case study institutions.

5.5.3.1 Qualtrics Survey

The first main method of primary data collection employed in this thesis was an original web-based survey, built on the Qualtrics platform.

5.5.3.1.1 The Survey Instrument

The survey instrument was an online questionnaire[50], which was designed to expand on the limited previous research into pay discussion behaviour by Burchell and Yagil (1997) and adapted to fit the UK academic target population of this study. Key sections of the survey instrument include:

- **Consent**: This section included informed survey consent details and required all participants to provide their informed consent to participate. The full information text about the survey to ensure informed consent that was provided to participants is reproduced in Appendix B. Apart from the consent question, respondents were free to skip any other question.
- **Eligibility**: This section included one question to confirm that the respondent qualified for the survey. To qualify, the respondent had to agree that they were employed at the named case study university, to engage in research and/or teaching.
- **Demographic Factors:** Drawing on Burchell and Yagil (1997), this section included 10 questions to collect demographic information of the respondent, most crucially sex and ethnicity.

[50] See Appendix E for the survey instrument text.

- **Labour Market Factors:** Drawing on Burchell and Yagil (1997), this section included 5 questions about the respondent's labour market orientation, including union membership, type of contract, and whether they had engaged in a recent job search.
- **Human Capital Factors:** Drawing particularly on Burchell and Yagil (1997), Becker (1962) and Mincer (Mincer and Polachek, 1974; Lemieux, 2003), this section included 6 questions about the respondents' human capital, including education, length of experience, and discipline.
- **Pay Discussion Behaviour**: Drawing particularly on Burchell and Yagil (1997) and extending further, this section asked 14 questions about pay discussion behaviour inside and outside a respondent's workplace and queried the respondents' opinions about the forces that influenced such behaviour.
- **Income Details**: This section asked 19 questions about the respondents' income, income band, mechanism of payment, and other elements of pay beyond basic pay. This was placed near the end of the survey in case it might have initially discouraged some participants from completing the survey.
- **Miscellaneous**: The remaining 2 questions sought volunteers for semi-structured interviews and allowed respondents to opt into an incentivised draw to reward their participation.

The practice of developing a survey, based on limited previous broader research into a phenomenon, in order to illuminate the previously unexamined behaviour of academics across disciplines, has precedent in other UK HE sector research, such as Fullwood et al.'s (2013) research into knowledge sharing behaviour by UK academics. Consequently, this thesis followed Fullwood et al.'s (2013) work, by interrogating the findings from the survey data through qualitative case study analysis. Questions in this survey were designed primarily to yield quantitative data, adapting Burchell and Yagil's method (1997), but a small number of questions allowed for qualitative responses, which may support future research stemming from this thesis.

Burchell and Yagil (1997) cautioned that the social desirability bias must be considered in the design of any future survey instrument to study social comparison of pay. The same taboo that makes employees uncomfortable with discussing wages with each other, may also make them uncomfortable with reporting discussions of their wages to researchers. The survey data used in Burchell and Yagil's (1997) research was gathered through a face-to-face structured interview. In contrast, e-surveys remove the researcher from the data collection process. This recognised technique to lessen social desirability bias was used in this thesis (Fowler, 1995).

5.5.3.1.2 The Survey Platform

Qualtrics is an online survey platform that facilitates the design, dissemination, and some analysis of surveys. I used this platform to design and disseminate my survey. I used SPSS to analyse the data because I distributed the survey as two separate surveys to the two case study universities. This enabled me to use each institution's actual name in the introductory content and certain questions, but it meant that the full dataset could not be analysed directly within the survey platform. Locations in the survey instrument where the institution name was provided are noted as '[HEI provider]' in Appendix E. Otherwise, the survey was identical for all respondents.

I explored purchasing Qualtrics panel responses and found it to be cost prohibitive and ineffective. It could only secure approximately 150 responses, as my proposed sample criteria required respondents to be employed in a UK public HEI to conduct teaching and/or research. I also considered an experimental survey design, but I was not convinced that this could address the heart of my research interest: Do academics actually discuss pay? Is there a 'culture of secrecy' over pay in the actual context of UK academia? Therefore, I determined to distribute my survey using the publicly available email addresses of academics at Universities Alpha and Beta, after piloting my survey instrument.

5.5.3.1.3 Pilot Survey

A two-stage pilot was employed to build a draft survey in Qualtrics. In the first stage, the survey was informally piloted with two current UK academics, who also had experience conducting and analysing survey data. These individuals received the draft survey via the Qualtrics platform. They provided feedback from their perspectives as both technical researchers and busy academics, in order to improve question parsimony and clarity. For example, I had initially placed the survey section with income questions before the section with pay discussion behaviour questions, thinking it was preferable to get the most objective questions answered first, including the demographic, labour market, human capital, and income related questions. My informal pilot respondents recommended placing the income questions last. These would likely be the most sensitive questions. Placing the income questions earlier might discourage some respondents from completing the survey and from providing the essential information for this study: whether they discussed pay with colleagues.

In the second stage, I conducted a formal pilot study following revisions that were made in response to the informal pilot. Pilot surveys are meant to mimic the conditions of the actual survey as closely as possible, and pilot participants cannot later be included in the real survey (Fink, 2009). The target

population of the real survey consisted of all individuals working in teaching and/or research at the two case study institutions during the first term of the 2016/17 academic year. To achieve as close an approximation of the real survey conditions as possible without excluding any potential real survey participants, the pilot survey was distributed using the same Qualtrics software to one large department of another research intensive university in the South East of England during the first term of the 2016/17 academic year. I manually collected email addresses of all academic and/or research staff listed on the department's online directory. Initial cold participation requests were emailed to the 98 staff listed. The primary goals of the pilot were to help test whether similarly situated academics would, after having been sent a cold-contact participation request, respond to certain questions in the survey and also complete the survey (Bourque and Fielder, 2003). Revisions to the survey instrument were developed from this pilot process. Suggesting these revisions were effective, the completed response rate rose by more than four percentage points from the formal pilot to the real survey.

5.5.3.1.4 Sampling Frame

The sampling frame of this survey consisted of all individuals working in teaching and/or research across all disciplines at the two case study universities in the UK during the first term of the 2016/17 academic year.[51] As all contact details used were publicly accessible online, no specific permission was required to compile the distribution list. All individuals with a title that indicated engagement in teaching and/or research, who were listed on any academic departmental directory at either university, were included. In some cases, it was challenging to make this determination due to the use of non-standard job titles or individuals who were listed in multiple locations with different job titles. The HESA contract categories detailed by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) were simplified to reflect the range of academics to be included in my sample, to ensure relevance to the HE academic population. Given the survey's distribution to research intensive universities, I removed post-1992 titles from these categories to streamline the appearance of the survey (Equality Challenge Unit, 2015b). A remaining problem was the HESA/ECU's use of the Lecturer A/B distinction. While that distinction persists in some institutions, informal consultation with several current lecturers indicated that it would not be a familiar designation for many respondents. Therefore, I also only used the generic designations of 'lecturer' and 'senior lecturer.' The categories selected include: professor, senior lecturer, reader, principal research fellow, lecturer, senior research fellow, research fellow, researcher, senior research assistant, teaching fellow, research assistant, and

[51] Logistical restrictions meant neither a random sample nor an HE-wide census was possible, which will be discussed as a limitation (Chapter 9).

teaching assistant.[52] Individuals for whom placement within academic work was unclear were included to avoid unintentional exclusion from the target population. Therefore, this survey was distributed to the entire accessible population of academics at the two case study universities, in a similar manner to other organisational surveys, which "normally involve all members of the organisation" (Simsek and Veiga, 2001, p. 222), such as the staff surveys that are commonly conducted by UK universities.

The taboo nature of pay discussions and the necessity to avoid any unethical sense of coercion by respondents from their employers, meant that seeking head of department (HoD) permission to distribute the survey, a tactic used by Fullwood et al (2013), was not feasible. Had individual HoD permission been sought, not only might this have given the impression of coercing respondents, this breadth of distribution achieved in this thesis might not have been possible. Some HoDs might have refused explicit access or been too busy to respond. Institutional approval from senior management at the two universities was instead secured to satisfy the requirements of my ethics committee, while survey respondents were provided with a clear statement assuring them that their participation was fully voluntary.[53]

An initial email invitation was sent on November 23, 2016 to all potential respondents in both case study universities separately. A first reminder was sent to those who had not yet completed the survey on November 30, 2016. A final reminder was sent on December 7, 2016. Respondents were able to unsubscribe from future reminders at all stages, and a small portion did. Data from both distributions were then combined for analysis in this thesis.

5.5.3.1.5 Response Rate

The response rate of this survey was 15.42%, using the completed responses submitted (384) and the total survey sample (2,491) shown in Table 5-4. The total survey sample excludes individuals who were sent the survey but whose email address returned an 'undeliverable' message (15) or who

[52] Given the temporary nature of most teaching assistants and many research assistants, most individuals holding these titles would not have been included in my sample because they would not have had employment profiles online. However, this is a benefit for interpreting my survey results because it means that my respondents were generally working under similar employment terms and conditions, apart from professorial pay not being subject to collective bargaining.

[53] The statement given to potential survey respondents was "This independent research is part of a PhD thesis that I am undertaking at Queen Mary University of London (QMUL ethical approval obtained ref: QMERC2016/51). This is not a survey issued by Queen Mary University of London or any other university or institution."

returned an automatic or manual email explaining that they were no longer at their institution or in an eligible job (27[54]). These individuals were not part of the eligible survey population.

Table 5-4: Academic Survey Response Rate

	Total	**%**
Total Sample*	2533	
Less		
No Longer at Institution/Self-Reported Not Eligible	27	
Undeliverable	15	
Total Survey Sample	2491	
Incomplete Responses	32	
Complete Responses	384	
Response Rate (Complete Responses)		**15.42**
Total Responses (Complete and Incomplete)	416	
Response Rate (Total)		16.70

**This sample includes all identifiable academics (teaching and/or research) with publicly available email addresses on the sites of the two case study universities*

Several factors influence survey response rates. This figure alone is insufficient to determine the validity of survey data. Part of understanding the response rate requires context. According to the work of Bourque and Fielder (2003), a 15.42% response rate meets expectations, given the sampling frame construction, the techniques employed to maximise responses, and the employment sector of the survey. This response rate is also consistent with expectations based upon other comparable surveys in the literature (Burchell and Yagil, 1997; Bourque and Fielder, 2003; Baruch and Holtom, 2008; Anseel *et al.*, 2010; Fullwood, Rowley and Delbridge, 2013; Housewright, Schonfeld and Wulfson, 2013; Lawson, Kitson and Hughes, 2016).

First, the liberal inclusion practice used to construct the sampling frame means that there may be additional individuals who were sent the survey but were ineligible because they had recently

[54] Three respondents indicated their disqualification through email and the survey. These individuals were only counted once in the disqualification calculation.

changed jobs or retired but had not been removed from their department's website. While such individuals would not have been able to pass the qualification stage of the survey, they would have remained in my total survey sample count if they took no action. There is no way to identify such people. Therefore, the total survey sample may still be somewhat artificially inflated, which would inaccurately deflate the response rate.

Secondly, the response rate of this survey is justified with reference to the techniques used to maximise responses. Bourque and Fielder's (2003, p. 17) guide to conducting self-administered surveys reported an average response rate of 10-20% for online surveys, including those using "email invitations to organisational members", as was used in this survey.[55] Meta-analyses of organisational surveys also identified clear differences in the expectation of response rates from different types of respondents (Baruch and Holtom, 2008; Anseel *et al.*, 2010). Of most relevance to this survey, Baruch and Holtom (2008) found that surveys in their meta-analysis that were based within the education sector had the lowest response rate of all the industry sectors that they identified. The mean response rate of this group of surveys was 49.1%, whilst the minimum was only 10% (Baruch and Holtom, 2008). Academics working in HE specifically have hectic workloads that may prevent them from responding to an electronic survey. The prevalence of surveys to which academics are exposed may also generate survey fatigue (Lawson, Kitson and Hughes, 2016). Additionally, the taboo nature of discussing pay may prove to be a further disincentive. Burchell and Yagil (1997, p. 746) suggested that "in the same way that asking someone how much they earn is seen as a taboo question, admitting to making comparisons with the pay of others is also subject to a strong social desirability bias." Apart from their research,[56] no previous survey querying pay discussion behaviour in the workplace (whether by academics or otherwise) could be identified for a benchmark.

Anseel et al.'s (2010) meta-analysis of organisational surveys from 1995-2008 demonstrated that techniques including providing advance notice, personalising survey invitations, ensuring the salience of the survey to potential respondents, using identification numbers for respondents, and

[55] More recent meta-analyses of organisational surveys of individuals, using a variety of administrative means, have found an average response rate of 52.3% to 52.6% (Baruch and Holtom, 2008; Anseel *et al.*, 2010). However, these studies have also identified a general downward trend in organisational survey response rates: a decline from 1975 to 1995, with general stabilisation since (Baruch and Holtom, 2008), but a continued, if minor, decline in response rate trends through 2008, after controlling for varying response enhancing tactics (Anseel *et al.*, 2010).

[56] The data Burchell and Yagil (1997, pp. 740; 746) conducted their analysis on was reported with an "achieved response rate" of more than 75%. However, it was an administered 90-minute survey of a broad array of topics aimed at a sample of the workforce of the Northampton "travel to work" area.

obtaining university sponsorship are all effective tactics to bolster response rates. All five techniques were used in this survey. Advance notice of about two weeks was provided through advertisements in a staff newsletter and on the staff intranet of the case study universities. Survey invitations were personalised by referencing the respondents' specific university and with my personal signature as the researcher. The survey topic is highly salient as it is about the respondents' own experiences. Additionally, coming in the wake of a significant dispute between the University and College Union (UCU) and the University and College Employers' Association (UCEA) over the 2016/17 pay settlement, the issue of pay may have felt particularly salient for many respondents (University and College Union, 2016a). Each respondent was assigned a random identification number so that their name cannot be associated with their responses in any stored data used for analysis. All communications with potential respondents were assured of this confidentiality and anonymity. In order to avoid any feelings of respondent coercion, the QMUL ethics committee required me not to seek university sponsorship of my survey and to make explicit in all survey invitations that no organisational sponsorship had been obtained.

Finally, the response rate of this study is consistent with, and even exceeds, other studies conducted in the context of UK HE. For example, a survey of UK academics, using a purchased e-mail listing, on the reasonably uncontroversial topic of research, teaching and communication behaviour, achieved only a 7.9% response rate (Housewright, Schonfeld and Wulfson, 2013). Online surveys about knowledge exchange behaviour by UK academics, which followed a similar process of obtaining email contacts to the one used in this survey, achieved response rates of 14.38% (Fullwood, Rowley and Delbridge, 2013) and 13.9% (Lawson, Kitson and Hughes, 2016) respectively. Thus, the 15.42% response rate in this study, meets expectations.

5.5.3.1.6 Nonresponse Bias Assessment

Another important consideration when assessing the validity of this survey data is the potential impact of non-response bias, which results from theoretically important differences between those who answer the survey and those who do not. Rogelberg and Stanton (2007, p. 198) note that "in the absence of good information about presence, magnitude, and direction of nonresponse bias, ignoring the results of a study with a 10% response rate—particularly if the research question explores a new and previously unaddressed issue—is just as foolish as assuming that one with a response rate of 80% is unassailable." The researchers describe nine techniques for a nonresponse bias impact assessment strategy (N-BIAS). This thesis employs the first technique, archival analysis,

to compare the demographics of respondents[57], which could theoretically be expected to be related to pay discussion behaviour, with known demographic data for the employment population at the two case study universities.

The most recently available archival data, at the time of the survey distribution, was extracted from data that was publicly reported by the two case study universities and aggregated to describe the full target population of the survey (Rogelberg and Stanton, 2007). Data for University Alpha was entirely extracted from the university's most recent equal pay audit and refers to the 2015/16 academic year. University Beta had not released an equal pay audit that did not exclude professors. Therefore, I attempted to extract University Beta's data from its most recent Athena SWAN application. However, the application only contained professorial and gender data (not ethnicity data) and only for STEMM faculty, representing about 76% of total relevant staff. Therefore, I extracted University Beta's gender, ethnicity and total teaching and/or research staff figures from Tables 1 and 2a of the publicly available analysis of the 2015/16 HESA returns (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2017). I finally consulted with HR staff at University Beta to confirm my interpretation of the HESA figures and to secure the number of professors in 2015/16, which was not reported in the public HESA analysis by institution. Separate figures for Universities Alpha and Beta are not reported in this thesis to further protect institutional anonymity, since the data is primarily from public sources.

This N-Bias analysis demonstrates that the proportions of women, BAME academics and professors amongst the combined survey respondents were not statistically significantly different to the combined target population. This was calculated using a one-sample T-test, using test values from the aggregated archival data shown as 'Case Studies' Combined Population' in Table 5-5. With dummy variables for being female, BAME, and a professor, the mean value for each variable is the same as the percentage of combined respondents with each trait. Similarly, the percentage of the known population with each trait was used as the test value for each one-sample T-test. This analysis provides confidence that this data has concurrent validity with the target population, and therefore is not significantly over or under-sampling based on gender, ethnicity, or professorial status.

[57] See Appendix F for a description of all respondent demographics.

Table 5-5: N-BIAS Assessment

	Survey Respondents	Case Studies' Combined Population	P-value (one-sample T-test)	Significance (95 % confidence level)
% Female	43.49% N = 384	42.95%	0.831	not significant
% BAME*	15.75% N = 381	19.11%	0.073	not significant
% Professor	22.83% N = 381	22.33%	0.815	not significant

**Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic*

Given the clear importance of acknowledging intersectionality, as demonstrated in analysis of the BAME female pay gap relative to white men in Chapter 4, additional tests for the proportions of BAME women, BAME men, white women, and white men, if not also for these categories amongst professors specifically, would also have been desirable. Unfortunately, these intersectional figures for the case studies' combined population could not be calculated from the publicly available archival data, as it was only available in report form and not as raw data to manipulate.

5.5.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

The second main method of primary data collection that was employed in this thesis was semi-structured interviews with actors of the academic workforce within my two case study universities. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three actor categories within each case study, including remuneration policy shapers, who were individuals who worked in the centre of the university in HR or as part of the senior management team; union representatives, who were members of the University and College Union branch committees; and academics, who were engaged in teaching and/or research within each case study institution. Three primary arguments justify these categories.

First, a fundamental feature of employment relationships, such as those between academics and universities, is an imbalance of power; employers wield more power than employees ceteris paribus (Sisson, 2016). The remuneration committees of UK universities, from which some of the remuneration policy shapers will be drawn, are required by the Committee of University Chairs[58] "to monitor accounting, internal control, risk, appointment and remuneration issues" (Ntim, Soobaroyen and Broad, 2017, p. 83). This only requires these committees to maintain direct oversight of senior management remuneration, but committee members sit at the pinnacle of

[58] The Higher Education Code of Governance is not legally binding, but it sets industry standards for responsible practice (Committee of University Chairs, 2014).

power within the university administration and human resources and should have an informed understanding of remuneration policy and practice throughout their institution. Layder (1993) emphasised the importance of considering structural power, with reference to Edwards (1979), particularly with respect to "the silent machinery of bureaucratic organisation" (Layder, 1993, p. 155) when selecting research methods. "The researcher must be sensitive to the existence of partly hidden, social relations of control embedded in the setting and context of such firms and which lie behind the upfront interactions between workers and authority figures" (Layder, 1993, p. 156). This concerns the apparently impersonal policies on "job categories, work rules, promotion and discipline procedures, wage scales, definitions of responsibilities and so on" (Layder, 1993, p. 155). A representative of the equalities bodies inside the universities should also be aware of recent concerns or developments in regards to ensuring fair remuneration for academics, which may influence the transparency around pay. A person within the human resources office charged with EDI responsibilities should also be able to provide an institutional perspective on remuneration relevant policies with a similar equality lens. Taken together, remuneration policy shapers will provide a top-down employer perspective of pay secrecy and openness within the university.

Second, in addition to employers, employees and trade unions have been identified as the other traditional actors in employment relations—alongside the state, whose policies provide some of the context for this thesis (Sisson, 2016). Therefore, the interviewee categories of UCU committee representatives and academics,[59] alongside the employer perspective discussed previously, provide a holistic picture of pay secrecy and openness policy and practice from the key employment relations actors inside the universities.

Lastly, pay is a critical element of the employment relationship on which trade unions seek to redress the imbalance of power for their members. This is why the union wage premium, although declining, has long been considered a benefit of membership (Williams, 2014). Therefore, focusing this research on the income-talk taboo, with reference to interviews from three different perspectives and key university policy documents that are directly or indirectly related to

[59] This research largely excludes casual staff doing teaching or research work, such as those hired to do one-off marking, one-off demonstrators, short-term research assistants, and compensated guest lecturers, who may fall under a labour service agreement (Sisson, 2016). This partly a logistical necessity; casual workers, even those doing academic work, typically do not appear on the public directories used to create the sampling frame for the survey associated with these interviews. It is also a conceptual decision. Since the income-talk taboo mechanism is under-researched, confining this initial exploratory work to those with reasonably parallel employment conditions should provide a clearer focus on the key phenomenon.

remuneration, should support a more comprehensive analysis of the power dynamics that shape relative secrecy or transparency of pay. Consistent with the 'disciplined flexibility' (Layder, 1993) approach to employing multiple data sources from different perspectives in workplace research, Acker's (2006c) study of the gender regimes in Swedish banks, with respect to the GPG, consisted of interviews with employees and management and attendance at several relevant trade union events.

5.5.3.2.1 Interview Schedule

I crafted three similar interview schedules, which were adapted to the focus of each employment relations actor category. Schedules included 8-11 primary questions each. Interviews were semi-structured, so that each question contained several prompts to help direct the responses toward areas of relevance that were identified in the literature that was reviewed prior to piloting and implementing the schedules.[60] Interviews were intentionally semi-structured to allow the voice, experience, and perceptions of the respondents to come through, particularly when discussing potentially sensitive subject matter. Often, the respondents described the experiences of themselves or colleagues through vignettes, rather than in a direct answer. Interviews with academics became partial work histories, as respondents recalled events stretching back several years, which were still impacting their 2016/17 working lives. My reflexive and flexible approach to these case study analyses allowed me to engage in a fairly organic conversation with participants, particularly the academics and UCU committee members, to probe issues raised by participants, while addressing the key questions crafted into my schedule.

Prior to beginning each interview, each participant was provided with a physical consent form and signed a copy for my records, pursuant to the regulations of the Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee. I emailed a copy of this consent form, which contained information about the project, to each participant in advance of their interview, so they were aware of the project details and the consent form prior to signing the form on meeting. Two participants returned the consent form electronically signed prior to meeting, but the remainder signed the form just prior to beginning the interview. This helped to emphasise the professional nature of my research, reassure respondents that their information would be protected, and begin to build trust. In some settings, signing a consent form could be perceived as clinical. However, as I was interviewing people who themselves do research, the process helped in building trust with the participants to ensure that they could talk freely about sensitive and stressful issues that many were experiencing at work. I also reviewed the biography of each academic participant and their relevant categorising traits (for those who had

[60] See Appendix G to read the interview schedules.

volunteered via my survey and therefore already provided them) in advance of each interview so that I could ensure I emphasised relevant probes. For academics who had not participated in my survey, I asked the same categorising questions, which appear in the interview schedule, before beginning each interview. This also enabled me to include relevant prompts, such as ones about the union to UCU members.

Key sections of the interview schedules include:

- **Expository**: Consistent with acknowledged good practice, an expository statement provided a clear explanation of the purpose, format and length of the interview, reason for recording the interview, and reasonable assurances to participants of their confidentiality, anonymity and ability to ask questions, seek clarification, or refuse to answer questions at any point (Rose, 1994; Whiting, 2008, p. 37).

- **Icebreaker into the Income-talk taboo:** This introductory question was meant to try and get respondents thinking about my subject to a degree that they may not have considered previously. When speaking with Dr Brendan Burchell at the Work, Employment and Society Conference 2016, he advised that since the taboo is something people may innately feel but have not necessarily considered deeply, it may be more useful to create a scenario in their head and ask them to comment on it, rather than to ask them first about their own experiences. This is why I began each interview with a "hypothetical-interaction question" (Lapan, Quartaroli and Riemer, 2012, p. 256), as a means to gather more rich data than with a direct, closed question. Furthermore, Leech (2002) suggested that expert respondents may find it easier to respond to these than direct questions when discussing their professional life.

- **University 'Pay Communication' Policies and the Income-Talk Taboo:** The first major half of the interview schedule was developed to elicit descriptions of policy and cultural perceptions in relation to the OSE in each case study, from the perspectives of employers, the union, and employees. Related to the emphasis on structural power in employment relations analysis (Edwards, 1979; Layder, 1993), Acker (1990) argues that the proclaimed gender neutrality of workplace policies often obscures deeply gendered organisational logic or bureaucracy. This provides the theoretical justification for critically assessing the extent to which the universities themselves formally and informally regulate the balance between

secrecy and transparency surrounding pay, which may shape the extent of the taboo against discussing pay that is felt within the universities. Limited existing scholarship tended to treat the income-talk taboo as a settled, homogenous cultural force (Akerlof and Yellen, 1990; Levine and Stanchi, 2001; Bierman and Gely, 2004; Lavie, 2009). However, there was potential for interesting gaps to emerge between the opinions of those at the centre and of (at least some) academics about how transparent pay was inside the universities.

- **Experience of University Pay Policies (Pay Scale, Market/Retention Supplements, Bonuses/Performance Awards, Allowances, Promotions, Professorial Review):** The second major half of the interview schedule was meant to explore the operation of policies on pay (and related progression). Key concepts known to impact pay inequality, such as revealing one's current pay level on application for a new job (Cowley, 2016; Sisson, 2016; Young, 2016), bonus pay (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2009; Metcalf and Rolfe, 2009), parenthood (Waldfogel, 1998; Budig and England, 2001; England, 2005), and promotion were discussed in this section. UK academia has been criticised for presenting a false meritocracy. What is characterised as gender-neutral meritocracy in academia, has been found to be strongly imbued with masculine assumptions; these assumptions can be summarised by the characterisation of a successful academic: one who publishes extensively, always contributes to research metrics, and never takes a career break (Knights and Richards, 2003). Knights and Richards (2003, p. 231) note that "experience in industry or the non-academic professions is formally to be taken into account in selecting an academic for promotion but there is no formal recognition of giving birth or mothering." Their criticism is consistent with Acker's (2012) critique that organisational logic is often falsely presented as gender-neutral. The extent to which the false neutrality of pay (and related progression) policies may be individually felt, but subject to a cloak of secrecy, could strengthen the detrimental impact of such policies on academics.

Although these interviews were semi-structured, I made clear from the outset that interviewees were free to ask me questions, which sometimes seemed to help them think through their responses. For example, one HoD asked why someone in their position would examine the pay of those within their department. I provided an anecdote of another HoD who had told me that this enabled them to take steps to help narrow the GPG within their department. In the spirit of 'action research', that respondent stated at the end of the interview that perhaps they needed to start

thinking more about pay issues. I also encouraged respondents to keep telling me stories of their anecdotal experiences when they were concerned about straying from the topic. Lastly, I made sure to give all respondents the opportunity for a final word at the end of each interview. Most did not have anything further to offer, but some provided quite helpful content in this way, such as a person who reflected that they find much more value in speaking about pay with friends outside academia. The person was considering their longer-term career options.

5.5.3.2.2 Pilot Interviews

Once I had agreed draft interview schedules with my supervisors, I conducted six pilot interviews to test my interview schedules in order to improve their clarity and ability to achieve a targeted line of semi-structured inquiry. All my pilot interviewees were based in one of my two case study institutions, apart from one who had recently moved to a new job. Participants were selected to provide the opportunity to engage with the different types of employment relations actors that I planned to include in my analysis. For academics, this included a mixture of males and females; white and a BAME individual, and a professor and non-professors, including one former HoD. A pilot interview was also conducted with a former remuneration policy shaper and a member of the local UCU committee. All pilot interviewee participants were therefore ineligible for participation in my case study interviews. Table 5-6 provides a summary of the pilot interviewees.

Table 5-6: Pilot Interviewee Demographics Analysis

Pilot Interview	Employment Relations Actor Type	Head of Department	Ethnicity	Gender Identity	Parental Status	UCU member
1	Academic (Professor)	Yes	White	Male	Parent	Yes
2	Academic (Non-Professor)	No	White	Male	No	Yes
3	UCU Committee	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4	Remuneration Policy Shaper	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
5	Academic (Non-Professor)	No	White	Female	No	Yes
6	Academic (Professor)	No	BAME	Female	Parent	Yes

5.5.3.2.3 Purposive Sampling of Interviewees

The interviews for the two case studies were obtained through a process of purposive sampling. This was intended to maximise the depth of material that can be gathered from a small number of cases (Teddlie and Yu, 2007). I used multiple purposive sampling techniques to achieve comparability between case studies and analytically important groups of academics, which was based on "purposive maximum variation sampling" (Dupin *et al.*, 2015, p. 73). This required

intentionally increasing the proportion of women and BAME academics interviewed to a level that was higher than their representation in the academic workforce of the case studies. Where this aim was not possible using the original pool of interview volunteers that I obtained through my Qualtrics survey, I supplemented with snowball sampling (Teddlie and Yu, 2007). Snowball sampling entailed securing additional interviewees from survey respondents with whom I had already established a connection, in order to reach workforce segments that might otherwise have been excluded (Atkinson and Flint, 2001). The remuneration policy shapers and UCU committee members were chosen based upon my expectations about the perspectives their positions could add to this research, with some guidance from the institutional gatekeepers and other shapers. Academics were chosen based upon my expectations about the interplay between workplace inequality, professorial status, and gender and ethnicity categories, with an intention to contrast the experiences of those with differing privilege.

The academic interview volunteer pool began with those who volunteered for a potential semi-structured interview through my Qualtrics survey. 120 individuals volunteered (31.3% of completed respondents). As may be expected, there was a significant difference between the pay discussion behaviour of interview volunteers and other respondents, as summarised in Table 5-7. Those who volunteered for a follow-up interview were more likely to admit discussing pay than those who did not volunteer. This difference is significant at the 1% confidence level ($p = 0.006$). Therefore, an effort was made to ensure that at least 25% of my interviewees did not report engaging in social pay comparison behaviour, in order to avoid only hearing from those who did report discussing their pay.

Table 5-7: Interviewee Volunteer Analysis

	% Comparing Pay	N	Pearson Chi-Square	P-value
Interview Volunteer			7.491	0.006***
Yes	65.0	120		
No	50.0	264		
Gendered Discipline			0.050	0.621
Male Dominated	56.2	89		
Integrated	54.1	294		
Female Dominated	100	1		
Gendered Discipline (Male Respondents Only)			1.031	0.597
Male Dominated	58.9	73		
Integrated	55.2	143		
Female Dominated	100	1		
Gendered Discipline (Female Respondents Only)			0.494	0.482
Male Dominated	43.8	16		
Integrated	53.0	151		
Female Dominated	-	-		
Gendered Dominance Perception			6.218	0.045**
Male Dominated	61.6	126		
Integrated	54.7	212		
Female Dominated	38.5	39		
Discipline			4.800	0.028**
SET Discipline	50.0	218		
Non-Set Discipline	61.4	158		

**p< 0.1. **p < 0.05. ***p < 0.01*

Further examination of the pay discussion behaviour, as summarised in Table 5-7, justified sampling across disciplines. I coded the respondents' disciplines as male-dominated, integrated, or female-dominated, using the ECU's (2015b) staff report figures and the 70% rule from Dex et al. (2008), where the authors suggested that women's wage growth is better when women work in male-dominated or integrated workplaces, than when they work in female-dominated workplaces. Dex et al. (2008) characterised workplaces with more than 70% men/women as male/female-dominated and other workplaces as integrated. There was no statistically significant difference in the pay comparison behaviour for those in male-dominated versus integrated disciplines.[61] This was true for all respondents and for men and women analysed separately.

When respondents were asked to place their department within the categories of male or female predominance based on their perception, and when respondents were divided by those working in Science, Engineering and Technology (SET)[62] disciplines or not, statistically significant differences were found. Those working in perceived female-dominated departments were the least likely to discuss pay, while those working in perceived male-dominated departments were the most likely to discuss pay. Contrastingly, those in SET disciplines (which tend to be more male-dominated

[61] This was also true for female-dominated disciplines but there was only 1 respondent in any female-dominated discipline.

[62] SET used to match terminology of Equality Challenge Unit (2016) (now AdvanceHE) staff data reports.

nationally) were less likely to discuss pay than those working in non-SET disciplines. It could be that departments covering SET disciplines in my case studies were less male-dominated than their disciplines were nationally. Alternatively, respondents' perception of the male/female dominance within their department may have been inaccurate. Either way, the analysis in Table 5-7 suggests that intentionally conducting semi-structured interviews with academics across disciplines made sense at this early stage in developing the OSE conceptualisation.

The first group of interviewees consisted of 5-7 remuneration policy shapers per university case study, who represent the employer perspective. For each university, these interviewees consisted of a mix of those with involvement in the remuneration committee, such as the human resources director, vice-chancellor[63] or an external committee member; and members of senior management and human resources with responsibilities for EDI issues, reward and/or trade union relations. Table 5-8 details the interviewees who were obtained in this sub-category for both case studies.

Table 5-8: Remuneration Policy Shaper Interviewees

University Alpha (5 Interviews)	
Remuneration Committee Participant #1	Interview Complete
Remuneration Committee Participant #2	Interview complete
Human Resources Member #1	Interview complete
Senior Manager #1	Interview complete
Senior Manager #2	Interview complete
University Beta (7 Interviews)	
Remuneration Committee Participant #1	Interview complete
Remuneration Committee Participant #2	Interview complete
Remuneration Committee Participant #3	Interview complete
Human Resources #1	Interview complete
Human Resources #2	Interview complete
Human Resources #3	Interview complete
Senior Manager #1	Interview complete

The second group of interviewees consisted of three UCU committee members per university, who had some connection to ethnicity and gender equality issues, as presented in Table 5-9. They provide the trade union perspective. UCU committee members—and some university policy shapers—were also academics. However, given the acknowledged difficulty in securing academics as research participants, due to their heavy workload and the frequency of such requests (Lawson,

[63] The term vice-chancellor is not used at all UK universities, but it is used in this thesis as the generic term for the most senior administrator of a UK university (Morgan, 2011b).

Kitson and Hughes, 2016), I interviewed such individuals in their capacity as UCU committee members or university policy shapers.

Table 5-9: University and College Union Committee Member Interviewees

University Alpha (3 Interviews)	
UCU Committee Member #1	Interview complete
UCU Committee Member #2	Interview complete
UCU Committee Member #3	Interview complete
University Beta (3 Interviews)	
UCU Committee Member #1	Interview complete
UCU Committee Member #2	Interview complete
UCU Committee Member #3	Interview complete

The third set of interviewees were academics (16 per case study), in order to provide the essential employee perspective. Academic interviews drew on a mixture of participants by discipline (no more than three from the same department) to ensure that specific cultures that may exist within different parts of a university had no undue influence over this thesis's findings. I assigned each department the discipline of nearest match to those reported in AdvanceHE's (2018) staff data report on the 2016/17 academic year, as displayed in Figure 4-5 and Figure 4-6 (Chapter 4).

Additionally, the different pay structures for professors and academics below the professoriate were discussed in Chapter 4. To capture a mixture of those with pay subject to sectoral collective bargaining and those under more individualised professorial pay structures, I sought to interview at least six professors per case study. The importance of this distinction is further supported by the findings of this thesis's original survey, that professors were much more likely to discuss their pay than non-professors, ceteris paribus (Chapter 7).

In terms of Acker's (2006b, 2006a) inequality regimes as the foundation of this thesis's analytical framework, it was also important to obtain a mixture of interviewees by their gender and ethnicity identities. Therefore, I aimed to achieve at least gender balance overall amongst academic interviewees within each case study. This intentionally elevated the voices of female academics above their employment representation in each university. Women made up nearly 40% of academic and/or research staff in University Alpha and nearly 45% in University Beta, according to the 2015/16 data used to validate the survey responses, which was the most recent available when the fieldwork was conducted.

Finally, I sought to ensure a reasonable balance between BAME and white individuals within each case study. This again intentionally elevated the voices of BAME academics above their employment

representation in each university. The significantly lower proportion of BAME staff (than women) among academics working in the case studies would have made obtaining a 50/50 balance of interviewees challenging. This was punctuated by the lack of any BAME staff from University Alpha having initially volunteered for a follow-up interview through my survey. BAME individuals made up nearly 15% of academic and/or research staff in University Alpha and just over 20% of academic and/or research staff in University Beta, according to the 2015/16 data available at the time of the fieldwork. Therefore, I sought to secure interviews with 4-5 BAME academics per case study (25-31.25% of the academic interviews).

The decision to elevate the voices of women, BAME academics, and BAME women above their employment representation levels is consistent with the use of Acker's (2006b, 2006a) inequality regimes and the intersectional feminist orientation of this thesis. Focusing on one category of disadvantage "leads at best to oversimplification of the concerns of inequality and at worst obscures the complex nature of inequality and domination, silencing the experiences of the least privileged and most subordinated" (Tatli and Özbilgin, 2012, p. 250). To consider potentially obscured voices in the thesis analysis, inclusion of such experiences needed to be maximised.

Given the importance of identity and individual perception, I did not follow a proscribed definition or visible minority method for categorising interviewees. For gender and ethnicity, interviewees were asked to categorise themselves. In the case of gender, most respondents identified as male or female. One respondent explained that she identified as a non-binary woman, although she felt that for the purposes of this study, she considered herself female because she felt that pay-related issues were influenced by how she was viewed by others, which was female. Therefore, for any analysis in this research where gender is important, her responses are considered to come from a female academic. In the case of ethnicity, I asked respondents whether they identified as white or BAME. Most had a clear answer, but again one respondent had a nuanced response. The respondent was mixed-race and brought up by white parents but felt perceived as black by colleagues. Again, in the context of the working environment, the respondent felt that BAME was the appropriate categorisation so that is how this respondent has been categorised.

A competing consideration was the fact that this research represents the first in-depth explorations into workplace pay secrecy. Therefore, I chose to include male and white voices in the research. This would allow for comparison of the experiences of those located at different intersections of societal privilege and exploration of the conclusion that hegemonic masculinity within academia, limits everyone (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Connected to this consideration, I also decided to

include 4-5 interviews per case study (25-31.25% of academic interviews) with those who answered (or would answer) no to the question "This research specifically concerns conversations you may have about your pay level relative to the pay level of others. Do you ever talk about pay with your co-workers?" This presented a low bar for demonstrating willingness (or unwillingness) to contravene the income-talk taboo, namely ever talking about pay with co-workers. The original survey provided some information about the demographics of academics who answered 'no' to this question. However, given my interest in creating a full first picture of the function of workplace pay secrecy, it was important to interrogate more deeply the motivations and circumstances driving compliance and violation of the income-talk taboo.

Through the Qualtrics survey, 120 academics volunteered for a follow-up interview, 34 from University Alpha (33.33% of 102 completed respondents) and 86 from University Beta (30.5% of 282 respondents). Table 5-10 disaggregates these volunteers along professorial status, gender, and ethnicity, illustrating the definitive need to use snowball sampling to attain the desired 4-5 academic interviewees of BAME identity from University Alpha.

Table 5-10: Initial Interview Volunteer Analysis

Interview	Professorial Status		Gender		Ethnicity		
Volunteers By:	Professor	Non-Professor	Female	Male	BAME	White	TOTAL
University Alpha	9	25	19	15	0	34	34
University Beta	19	67	35	51	16	70	86

Table 5-11 summarises the purposive sampling for academic interviews in University Alpha. The sampling also includes three HoDs per university, as they have unique oversight of the pay distributions within their academic unit and the ability to take steps to remedy the inequality that they observe. However, HoD status is not identified here to protect their anonymity.

Table 5-11: Academics: University Alpha (16 Interviews)

Professor	Discipline	Gender	Ethnicity	Union Member	Parent	Talk Pay?
Yes	Psychology, behavioural sciences	Female	White	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Geography, environmental studies	Female	White	Yes	No	Yes
Yes	Music, dance, drama performing arts	Female	White	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Law	Male	White	Yes	Yes	No
Yes	Psychology, behavioural sciences	Female	White	Yes	No	Yes
Yes	Business, management studies	Female	BAME	No	Yes	No
Yes	English language, literature	Male	White	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Music, dance, drama performing arts	Female	BAME	Yes	No	No
No	Electrical, electronic, computer engineering	Male	White	No	No	Yes
No	Business, management studies	Male	White	No	Yes	Yes
No	Social work, social policy	Male	BAME	Yes	No	Yes
No	Business, management studies	Male	BAME	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Politics, international studies	Female	White	No	Yes	No
No	History	Male	White	Yes	No	Yes
No	Modern languages	Female	White	Yes	Yes	No
No	Politics, international studies	Female	White	No	No	Yes
7 Prof		**9 Female**	**4 BAME**	**11 Union Members**	**9 Parents**	**11 Talk Pay**
9 No		**7 Male**	**12 White**	**5 No**	**7 No**	**5 No**

Table 5-12 summarises the purposive sampling for academic interviews in University Beta.

Table 5-12: Academics: University Beta (16 Interviews)

Professor	Discipline	Gender	Ethnicity	Union Member	Parent	Talk Pay?
Yes	Business, management studies	Female	No	No	No	Yes
Yes	Biosciences	Male	BAME	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Modern languages	Male	No	Yes	No	Yes
Yes	Business, management studies	Female	BAME	No	No	Yes
Yes	Biosciences	Female	BAME	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	English language, literature	Female	No	No	Yes	No
Yes	Clinical Medicine	Male	No	No	No	Yes
No	Politics, international studies	Male	No	No	No	Yes
No	Modern languages	Female	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Chemistry	Female	No	Yes	Yes	No
No	Clinical Medicine	Male	BAME	No	Yes	No
No	Geography	Male	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Business, management studies	Female	No	Yes	No	Yes
No	Electrical, electronic, computer engineering	Female	No	Yes	Yes	No
No	Physics	Male	BAME	No	Yes	Yes
No	Biosciences	Female	No	Yes	No	Yes
7 Prof		**9 Female**	**5 BAME**	**10 Union Members**	**9 Parents**	**12 Talk Pay**
9 No		**7 Male**	**11 White**	**6 No**	**7 No**	**4 No**

The interview process was conducted in one phase from May 2017 through December 2017. I conducted a total of 50 interviews across the three academic employment actor types described

earlier (24 interviews at University Alpha and 26 interviews at University Beta). Interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes, although two were only 45 minutes and two lasted around 2 hours. Interviews were conducted in person[64] to eliminate risk of technical difficulties cutting into interview time or creating poor quality audio recordings for transcription, and because it is easier to 'read' participant interest and comfort during in-person discussion.

5.5.3.3 Publicly Available Pay and Progression Related Policy Documents

Where appropriate, the substance of semi-structured interviews will be compared with the text of relevant policy documents related directly or indirectly to remuneration and equality from each case study. Documents that were obtained fall under the following headings: Athena SWAN, university EDI committee, equal pay audit/review, University and College Union, pay scale, market/retention supplements, bonuses/performance awards, allowances, promotions, and professorial review. I kept a physical binder and an electronic file of these documents for each case study for ease of reference. These documents drive the analysis in Chapter 6 but cannot be directly cited or quoted from, in order to maintain my ethical commitment to institutional confidentiality.

5.5.3.4 Research Diary

The importance of recording thoughts and minor analyses during fieldwork is well recognised (Silverman, 2010). Components of my research diary took two forms: supervision reports and interview notes. After each supervision (approximately monthly), I noted what we discussed, including key research problems and planned next steps. Whilst these reports were an administrative requirement of my PhD programme, I typically included more detail than required. Therefore, they came to encapsulate key aspects of the research process, helping me to recall my research decision-making process. I additionally diarised through interview notes. I wrote notes during each interview, in addition to audio recording. They summarised the narratives and documented references that interviewees made to resources, documents, and occasionally other academic writing. Soon after each interview, I typed these notes for later reference. This helped me to secure and collate suggested resources and allowed me to add texture to the conversation summaries where I recalled something, but I had not been able to note it, such as when individuals significantly paused or laughed, suggesting thoughts beyond the stated words.

[64] I wanted to complete and transcribe one interview prior to attending an NVIVO training, and the participant could only participate by phone within that time frame.

5.5.4 Primary Data Analysis

This section will finally explain the general processes used to analyse primary data collected for this thesis.

5.5.4.1 Primary Survey Data Analysis

This section describes the essential principles of the analysis of the Qualtrics survey data. Upon completion of the survey data collection, the data was downloaded from Qualtrics and files for the two case studies were merged. As part of the merge, I added a variable that indicated the case study that each response came from to enable comparison of pay discussion behaviour between the two institutions. This comparison was essential to demonstrating the legitimacy of merging the data (Chapter 7). Despite this combination, analysis of this full dataset remains indicative, not statistically generalisable to all UK academics due to the survey's limited sampling frame. Nevertheless, the completed response rate—15.42%—indicated sufficient engagement with the exercise across both institutions (Table 5-4), whilst the N-BIAS analysis conducted suggested minimal concern of non-response bias amongst the target population (Table 5-5).

This survey revisited Burchell and Yagil's (1997) attempts to identify factors associated with the propensity to engage in social pay comparison. For the first time, this survey begins to suggest who, among UK academics, are talking about their pay. This will be done first by testing the bivariate relationship between identified variables from previous literature and reporting social pay comparison behaviour using chi-square tests. Next, a binomial logistic regression model will be specified using the same independent variables and dichotomous dependent variable to indicate the relative strength of the previous relationships, ceteris paribus.

5.5.4.2 Qualitative Case Study Data Analysis

This section describes the essential principles of the qualitative case study data analysis, making use of the semi-structured interviews alongside remuneration-related policy documents from each case study. In consideration of 'disciplined flexibility' (Layder, 1993), early analysis of the survey data was completed prior to conducting most of the interviews. Therefore, I was aware that professors seemed to talk about pay more than academics below the professoriate and sought to probe respondents with that finding in mind where relevant.

I transcribed all the interviews using Wreally.com. I opted against contracted transcribing for three reasons. First, many colleagues had transcription done externally and still had to spend a great deal of time verifying and correcting transcripts, even from internally recommended transcribers. Second, I wanted to be able to provide complete assurance to my participants that no one would

hear the recordings besides me. Some participants revealed particularly sensitive experiences. I believe this occurred because I established their trust. At the conclusion of an interview with one academic who was experiencing extraordinarily stressful pay and progression challenges, the participant told me that I was really good at interviewing, that I had a naturally kind way of listening, which seemed to open them up. While most of my respondents were not elite interviewees, some of them could potentially be personally identified from their transcripts, for example those with niche research areas that were discussed in the interview. Finally, doing my own transcription helped me to become familiar with my data before coding.

The process of analysis was iterative, drawing on the initial synthesis of literature and evolving to consider key ideas that emerged from the interviews. Writing Chapters 6 and 8 began somewhat before the coding process and continued after it was complete. NVIVO is a valuable tool for qualitative analysis, particularly where there is a desire to explore intersecting identities (such as gender and ethnicity) and experiences of processes (Mooney, 2016). Therefore, I used NVIVO 11. I initially created a classification sheet to record interviewee demographics to enable later recall of text by, for instance, BAME women professors. I also auto coded each interview transcript by speaker and by interview question to enable more efficient exploration of content pertaining to key ideas of interest, such as the promotion process. Next, I began manual coding of each transcript, guided initially by creating parent nodes from the four key themes identified in Figure 4-7 (Chapter 4). Themes are ideas "that can be seen running through several responses" (Harding, 2013, p. 6). Under this came child nodes using the four theorised concepts that were associated with inequality regime components and linked with a pay communication typology component. A concept is an "underlying idea that is not necessarily referred to directly by respondents" (Harding, 2013, p. 6). Under these, emerged key categories based on the experiences of academics. Categories are headings "under which different sections of data can be placed for the purpose of analysis" (Harding, 2013, p. 6). Two free nodes that did not fit this hierarchical node system precisely were also identified.[65] The iterative aspect of this analysis, which involved reading each full transcript many times, helped to reduce the risk of the NVIVO process becoming mechanistic. The hierarchical node coding tree process enabled me to identify commonalities in the experiences of academics, and to consider these experiences in relation to the assertions of remuneration policy shapers, union representatives and university policy documents, similar to the thematic analysis process of Healy et al. (2010).

[65] See Appendix H for a summary of coding nodes.

Chapter 6 Employer 'Pay Communication' Policy, Perspectives on Data Transparency, and External Recognition: The Setting

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the analysis is located at the level of the institutional setting and draws on the intermediate social organisation of two workplaces. Analysing the institutional setting of two research intensive universities in the South East of England is consistent with the adoption of Layder's (1993, 2013) social domain and adaptive theories in this thesis (Chapter 5). This analysis will address the first sub-research question: To what effect has the pay 'transparency agenda' been performed in the two university case studies? To answer this question, this chapter will revisit the analytical framework that was initially developed through Chapters 2-4 for thematic analysis of the relationship between the organisational salary environment (OSE) and the persistent gender and ethnicity-based pay inequality in the two case study universities. Then the two institutional case studies will be described. The description will first demonstrate the extent to which the pay 'transparency agenda' has been formally 'performed' in each institution, based on their public pay and progression-related policies. Second, the description will reveal the pay inequality inside the case study institutions, based on the Times Higher Education (THE) pay survey, whilst exploring the additional changing forces that could augment the pay inequality that is experienced within the UK's higher education (HE) sector. Finally, this chapter will compare and contrast the institutional settings of Universities Alpha and Beta through the lens of policy shapers, union representatives and academics, with a focus first on the theme of data transparency and second on the theme of external recognition of inclusive employment practices. The chapter will conclude by demonstrating the theoretical contribution that emerged from this analysis, namely the functioning of employer 'pay communication' policies as the first component of the OSE analytical framework.

6.2 A Call for Thematic Analysis

While the performance of the pay 'transparency agenda' to reduce unfairness, especially based on gender and ethnicity (Chapter 1), has been argued, the paradox is that perfunctory transparency can become a defence of gendered and racialised practices that reinforce inequality. The focus on the employer perspective in traditional 'pay communication' research has been described as a considerable shortcoming in the existing literature (Chapter 3), which creates a risk that the asymmetric power of employers over employees (Sisson, 2016) encourages such communication to become secrecy masquerading as transparency. This has been illustrated, for instance, in the context of Dutch and UK academic recruitment practices (Bozionelos, 2005; van den Brink, Benschop and Jansen, 2010). Thematic analysis here and in Chapter 8 will strengthen the understanding of this

paradox, by extension to pay and related progression policies in UK academia, contextualised by the income-talk taboo (Fox, 2014).

Performance of pay transparency in the two university case studies did not mean radical transparency of individual level pay. The more conservative focus of transparency was on presenting systems for pay determination and progression as transparent and reporting some aggregate analyses of the outcomes of those systems, albeit not always in a timely or consistent fashion. This suggests a risk of something similar to what the US legal and sociology scholar Edelman (2016) called "symbolic civil rights." Edelman (2016) argues that human resource departments have a tendency to create the appearance of doing something, which is motivated by legal compliance rather than motivated by eliminating discrimination. This partially explains the persistence of workplace gender and race discrimination, despite decades of legal protection. Edelman (2016, p. 107) points to "symbolic structures, including statements and posters indicating a commitment to civil rights compliance, policies banning discrimination (and later, sexual harassment), and the creation of compliance officer positions, grievance procedures, and training and recruitment programs", as problematic tactics intended to demonstrate legal compliance that have been adopted by government, universities and private employers. Ahmed (2012) made a similar observation of the weak link between stated equality policy aims and actual outcomes and cultural shifts surrounding racism in UK universities. Ahmed (2012) deftly illuminated the practice of UK universities creating equalities documents instead of doing equalities work—at best—or creating equalities documents that actively obscure bad practice to preserve reputation—at worst. This chapter will demonstrate that universities operationalise equal pay and diversity data publication and external recognition communication, such as about Athena SWAN, in a similar manner. This will thus reveal a pay 'transparency paradox', from which will emerge the first OSE component, namely the functioning of employer 'pay communication' policies.

This chapter and Chapter 8 will apply the foundation of this thesis's analytical framework that has been developed through Chapters 2-4. Acker (2006b, p. 441) described her inequality regimes, on which this thesis's analytical framework is founded, as "interlocked practices and processes." This thesis applies analytical separation between the four components used in the thematic analysis, whilst acknowledging their interconnectedness in practice. For example, professorial pay banding at University Alpha is a bureaucratic process through which professorial pay and advancement is determined, and the experience of academic staff with professorial banding in Alpha will be analysed from this perspective in Chapter 8. However, the decision in University Alpha to analyse

pay only within professorial pay bands and not across the professoriate as a whole in their equal pay audits, has implications for understanding the influence of vertical segregation within the professoriate on the gender pay gap (GPG). This will be discussed from the perspective of data transparency in this chapter.

6.3 Case Study Comparison: 'Pay Transparency' Policies

UK universities are quasi-public, taxpayer supported institutions and subject to multi-layered pressures to become more transparent about their pay (Chapter 4). Within this context, there is a certain degree of similarity in terms of employment policies across HE institutions in the UK, but there are also differences in how institutions have responded to growing transparency pressures. While the thematic analysis of this chapter will focus on the institutional setting created by data transparency and external recognition communication, it is important to first assess the differences in the degree of formalised transparency that the policies of Universities Alpha and Beta indicate.

Table 6-1 illustrates several ways in which University Alpha appears to have progressed towards a more formalised and transparent pay and related progression practice than University Beta by the academic year 2016/17. This table has been prepared based on an analysis of policy documents from the respective website of each institution, supplemented by clarifications from relevant actors during the interviews and through e-mail follow-ups where necessary. Policies have been organised under each of the four themes of this thesis's analytical framework: data transparency, external recognition[66], informal pay secrecy norms, and bureaucratic pay and promotion processes. In the table, a formalised policy that demonstrates transparency is indicated by underlined bold text, and a policy that detracts from transparency is indicated by normal text.

[66] As of April 7, 2018, only one UK institution held an Athena SWAN gold award, 15 held a silver award, and a further 127 held a bronze award (Equality Challenge Unit, 2018c). To preserve institutional anonymity of Universities Alpha and Beta, the level of institutional award held will not be reported. That they engaged in successfully attaining the recognition is sufficient. Additionally, only 9 UK institutions held a Race Equality Charter award, while 42 were signed up to the charter (Equality Challenge Unit, 2018d). To again preserve institutional anonymity, the award status of these institutions will not be reported in this thesis. That the institution has made the public commitment (or not) is sufficient to indicate variation.

Table 6-1: Key Pay and Progression Policies by Analytical Framework Theme in Universities Alpha and Beta during 2016/17

University Alpha	University Beta
Data Transparency	
→Established a regular, publicised schedule of publishing equal pay audits, which included at least all academic staff. Detailed PDF of past audits available online.	→Had not published an equal pay audit including at least all academic staff. Summary of one partial audit available online. Was in planning stages for a full audit.
→Data on diversity of workforce not consistently published according to published schedule.	→Data on diversity of workforce not consistently published according to published schedule.
External Recognition	
→Signatory of Race Equality Charter	→Not a Signatory of Race Equality Charter
→Held an institutional Athena SWAN award	**→Held an institutional Athena SWAN award**
Informal Pay Secrecy Norms	
→Academics not bound by contractual pay secrecy clauses	**→Academics not bound by contractual pay secrecy clauses**
→Payroll part of central budget	→Payroll part of departmental budget
Bureaucratic Pay and Promotion Processes	
→Professorial Pay is banded	→Professorial pay is not banded
→Published matrices for every level of academic promotion and professorial banding	**→Published matrices for every level of academic promotion only (not professorial banding)**
→Participates in national collective bargaining for academic pay below professor, voluntarily applies same pay award to professors.	**→Participates in national collective bargaining for academic pay below professor, voluntarily applies same pay award to professors.**
→Senior Lecturer and Reader on same pay band in institutional pay scale	→Senior Lecturer and Reader on same pay band in institutional pay scale
→Had published bonus policy for exceptional contributions, as one-off payment, pay rise via accelerated increments within grade or advancement to a contributory point on the pay scale.	**→Had published bonus policy for exceptional contributions, as one-off payment, pay rise via accelerated increments within grade or advancement to a contributory point on the pay scale.**
→Had published market supplement policy to attract/retain hard to recruit expertise in a transparent and equitable manner.	**→Had published market supplement policy to attract/retain hard to recruit expertise in a transparent and equitable manner.**
→Had published Head of School pay supplement policy	**→Had published Head of School pay supplement policy**

Of the 13 policy areas analysed across the four themes, University Beta policies detract from transparent performance in six areas, while University Alpha does so in only two. Given the greater degree of formalisation of pay transparency at University Alpha than Beta across a range of pay and related progression policy areas, workplace equality outcomes and experiences could be expected to be better at Alpha than Beta. We might particularly expect this for professorial pay, given that Alpha had a well-established professorial pay banding structure, which is thought to ensure greater equality, while University Beta did not.

Therefore, it is surprising that the following section reveals that these institutions had a consistently similar and above average GPG for all academics. It is further unexpected that the professorial GPG at University Alpha was markedly worse than average across the UK and was growing wider leading up to 2016/17, while at the same time, Beta was consistently much better than average across the UK and was narrowing. Striking similarities in the inequality experiences reported by academics in both institutions will be unpacked in Chapter 8. This suggests that pay 'transparency agenda' performance serves a symbolic role for institutional reputation, whilst creating barriers to practical challenges to inequality. The risk of formalised employment practices falling short of their goal of reducing workplace inequality has been explored under the coined term 'hyper-formalisation' (Noon *et al.*, 2013). This concept has been used to explain persistent academic recruitment inequality in the Dutch and British contexts, as previously mentioned (Bozionelos, 2005; van den Brink, Benschop and Jansen, 2010).

6.4 Case Study Comparison: Pay Inequality

This section describes the GPG trends at Universities Alpha and Beta using the THE pay survey to the fullest extent possible, without compromising institutional anonymity.[67] This locates Universities Alpha and Beta within the macro HE sectoral context level analysis that was presented in Chapter 4. Since at least 2007, the THE has created transparency pressure on UK universities by publishing an analysis of the mean salary for full-time male and female academics by university (Fearn and Newman, 2007). Since 2008, they have also included the same figures for professors only (Fearn and Newman, 2008; Fearn, 2009; Morgan and Fearn, 2010; Morgan, 2011a; Times Higher Education, 2012; Grove, 2013a, 2014, 2015b, 2016a, 2017b). Similar criticism of the THE's publication was expressed by policy shapers at the centre of both universities during the interview stage of this

[67] This analysis pertains only to the gender pay gap because the Times Higher Education pay survey has only analysed the gap shown in HESA data by gender year-on-year. Institutional level pay analysis by gender and ethnicity using the raw HESA data available for this thesis would violate my data access agreement terms with HESA.

thesis. The criticism was based on the THE's use of an aggregate level of analysis. Nevertheless, this publication does create visibility of inequality (Acker, 2006a, 2006b). Unlike university compliance with the PSED and Athena SWAN applications, universities do not control the THE's published messages about this visible inequality. However, the THE only calculates the unadjusted GPG, while equal pay audits disaggregate the data, to consider whether pay is different between men and women doing jobs that have been rated of equal value through a job evaluation exercise (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2015b).

The above understanding of equal pay audits is somewhat weakened when the audits are critically analysed within the practical context of academic employment. In many respects, academics from lecturer to professor do the same basic job, particularly those who are employed through traditional teaching and research contracts. The academic promotion guidance of Universities Alpha and Beta suggests that academic promotion, which unlocks access to higher points on the pay scale or above the pay scale, essentially rewards subjective assessment of past achievements, not the duties of the new role that the academic fills following a promotion. Academics are aware of the importance of an academic CV (or its contents) to the success of academic promotions. This notion can be illustrated in practise. If a senior lecturer is promoted partly based on scholarship achievements that are demonstrated through the creation of a successful module and the academic repeats the teaching of that module for several years, they do not revert back to the pay range of a lecturer because they have not created another brilliant new module. If a professor achieves the professoriate partly based on publishing 'paradigm-shifting' research and their work subsequently becomes less revered, they are not demoted to the pay range of a reader. Without advocating for such pay declines, these examples raise questions about the appropriateness of the traditional job evaluation (Acker, 1989) and equal pay audit logic in the specific context of academic employment in the UK. Universities should reflect on the implications of this for their pay setting and promotion practices.

Universities Alpha and Beta had both conducted at least one equal pay audit in the decade prior to 2016/17. However, the level of detail that was released publicly about these audits varied. Therefore, direct comparison between the institutions or consistent analysis of change over time is impossible. While University Alpha's audits included all staff, University Beta's most recent audit excluded professors. By contrast, the THE Pay Survey analyses data that nearly all public UK universities submit directly to HESA and has used a uniform analysis method over the past decade. This allows for a consistent comparison to be made over time between the two case study

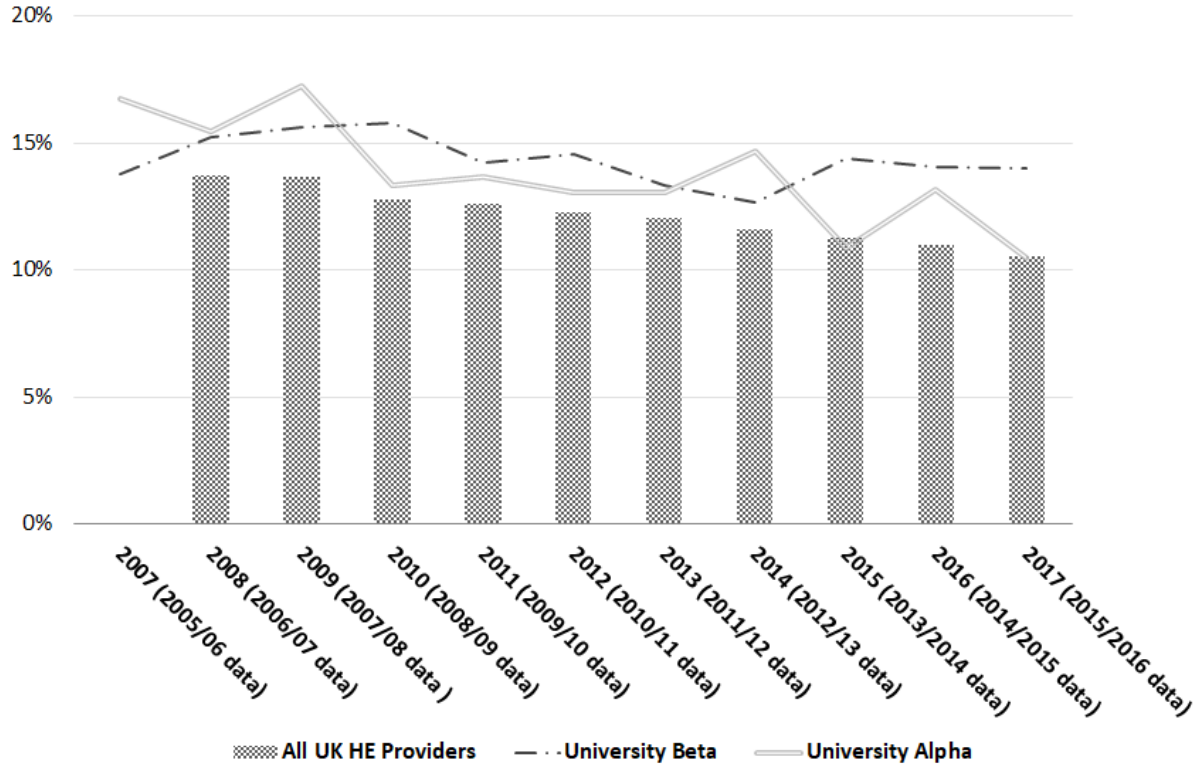
universities. Furthermore, the limitations of job evaluation principles in the context of academic work suggests that there is value in making such aggregate comparisons.

The THE has never provided institutional level analysis by ethnicity or gender/ethnicity in their pay survey. Although aggregate UK-wide ethnic pay gap data was finally provided in 2017, the analysis was not broken down by institution, nor was it presented in intersection with gender. The publication did not compare BAME men and women academics separately against white male academics. Therefore, this section can only consider the GPG trends over time. It cannot shed any light on the potentially distinct trends experienced by BAME men and women academics (Fearn and Newman, 2007, 2008; Fearn, 2009; Morgan and Fearn, 2010; Morgan, 2011a; Times Higher Education, 2012; Grove, 2013a, 2014, 2015b, 2016a, 2017b).

Despite the performance of some transparent pay and related policies in both universities, Figure 6-1 demonstrates that the GPG at Universities Alpha and Beta had consistently run at, or somewhat wider than, the gap for all public UK universities that are included in the THE publication.[68] This suggests that there was at least a structural pay inequality concern for women in both universities. So, although this analysis cannot show that men and women at the same level, such as lecturer, are being paid differently, it does at least suggest there may be a vertical segregation problem. Men may be more concentrated at higher paid job levels, particularly as professors, whereas women may be more concentrated at lower paid job levels. Equality questions should be asked about the academic promotion systems and recruitment processes that generate such outcomes.

[68] Analysis of the THE pay survey publications here follows the established protocol in this research by labelling the specific institutional figures University Alpha and University Beta. This graph compiles multiple years of THE data, which is also behind a paywall, and is reported in a substantially different format. THE reports average annual salary for full-time men and women, whereas this analysis relies only on the percentage gaps between men and women. Therefore, connecting these figures to their case study of origin does not substantially identify the research sites.

Figure 6-1: Universities Alpha and Beta Mean Full-Time Academic Gender Pay Gap



Note: The 'All UK HE Providers' figure was not reported in the 2007 publication.
Source: Author's analysis of the Times Higher Education pay survey (2007-2017)

The GPG amongst professors within University Alpha was wider than the national average in most of the 2007-2017 publications and was widening further in the last few years of the analysis, whilst the same gap in University Beta was narrower than the national average over the same period and was narrowing in the last few years of the analysis.[69] Does this mean that University Beta has solved the pay inequality problem, at least for those women who manage to reach the lofty heights of professor, whilst inequality is worsening for such women in University Alpha? The aggregate data presented by the THE cannot answer that question, but it does suggest an important point of difference between the two institutions. As pointed out by Helen Fairfoul, chief executive of the University and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) in the 2017 THE survey publication, the professorial GPG could widen 'counter-intuitively' due to an increase in the promotion of women to the professoriate. Newly promoted professors would generally begin as the lowest paid professors

[69] The figures behind this statement were calculated using the same process as the all academics figures (in this case, GPG = [(male professorial annual salary mean - female professorial annual salary mean)/ (male professorial annual salary mean)]. However, the figure demonstrating these professorial trends and appendix tables providing the precise GPG figures underlying the all-academic and professor only GPG analysis are not presented in this thesis. This is to protect institutional anonymity of Universities Alpha and Beta.

within an institution. Starting from a position where men were more normally distributed along the range of professorial pay in an institution, it would take time for women to achieve a similar normal distribution in order to narrow the gap (Grove, 2017b). It is possible that this could partly explain the widening professorial pay gap at University Alpha. During the interviews, Alpha policy shapers were keen to promote their flagship women's mentorship scheme, which was created to help more women to achieve promotion to the professoriate. However, Alpha union representatives were sceptical that the programme had significantly shifted the proportion of women in their professoriate, based on their own analysis of workforce statistics.[70]

Conversely, if recently appointed women professors were becoming discouraged and leaving the institution, leaving the more senior women professors in-post, this could reduce the professorial GPG. The THE analysis revealed that more than 1/3 of UK universities with 150 or more professors saw the proportion of professorial posts held by women decline from 2012/13 to 2015/16 (Chapter 4). The analysis, however, did not show whether this shift occurred due to the number of male professors growing more quickly than female professors or whether instead more female professors left the institution. If it was the latter, no comment was made on the relative pay of the women who left (Grove, 2017a). It may be worthwhile, however, to note that the proportion of professorships held by women at University Beta declined during this three-year analysis period. These theoretical explanations for the aggregate GPG trends would benefit from further investigation into the experience of becoming a professor, which this thesis will address through a discussion of professorial pay setting experiences in Chapter 8.

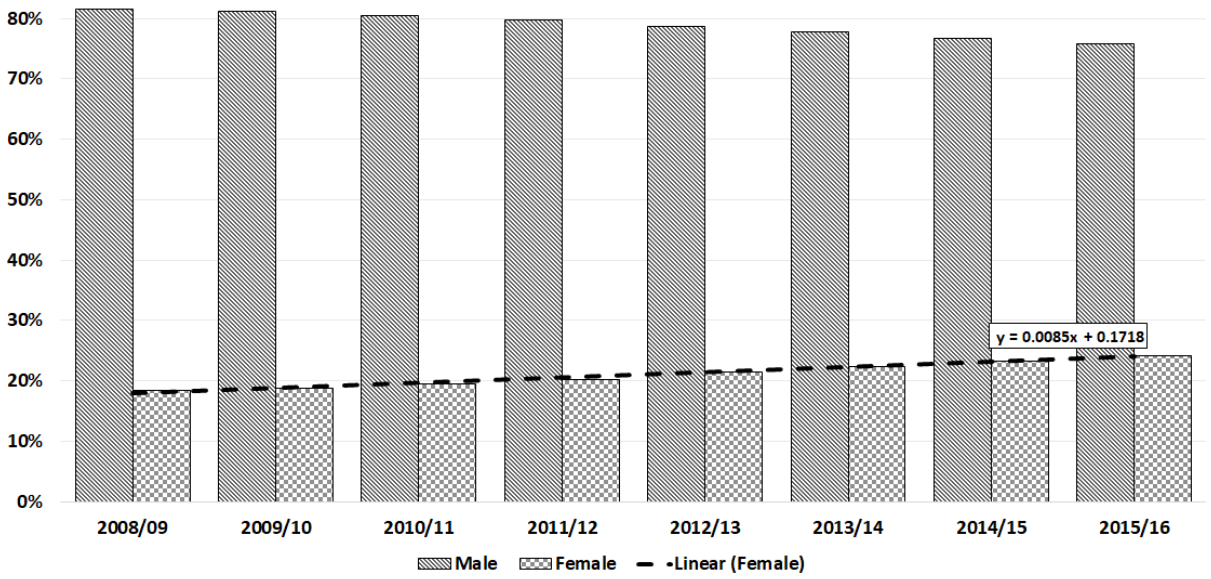
This section has so far discussed the aggregate institutional level trends in the GPG and professorial GPG for Universities Alpha and Beta, in relation to trends across the HE sector. Vertical segregation, particularly regarding the male-dominance of the professoriate, may account for some of this continued pay gap. As illustrated in Chapter 4, vertical segregation is a significant concern across UK academia, with only 24.6% of all professorships held by women, only 9.4% held by BAME staff, and only 2.1% held by BAME women in the 2016/17 academic year (AdvanceHE, 2018). However, it is important to acknowledge some additional changing forces that may augment the pay inequality experienced within HE. These particularly include changes in the workforce composition, market supplement and discretionary pay awards, pay ranges, and the Research Excellence Framework

[70] The representative was not able to share their analyses due to confidentiality concerns, so this disconnect could not be further interrogated.

(REF). Conversely, union-led collective bargaining for pay across the sector, ought to have constrained pay inequality.

The first additional force that may augment pay inequality within UK HE is the changing composition of the academic workforce, particularly with respect to the professoriate and gender. Analysis of the UK's academic workforce was conducted for this thesis using the headcount of all full-time academic staff (those on teaching and/or research contracts) in the HESA Staff Record for the academic years 2008/09 through 2015/16. This dataset was also used to demonstrate HE pay inequality trends in Chapter 4. This analysis begins in the 2008/09 academic year because the variable that directly identifies professorial status is only present in the HESA data from 2008/09 onwards.[71] This analysis illustrates that although the professoriate remains predominantly male, it has become somewhat less so over time.[72] However, the professoriate as a proportion of all academic staff has remained stable.[73]

Figure 6-2: Proportion of Full-Time UK Professors by Gender

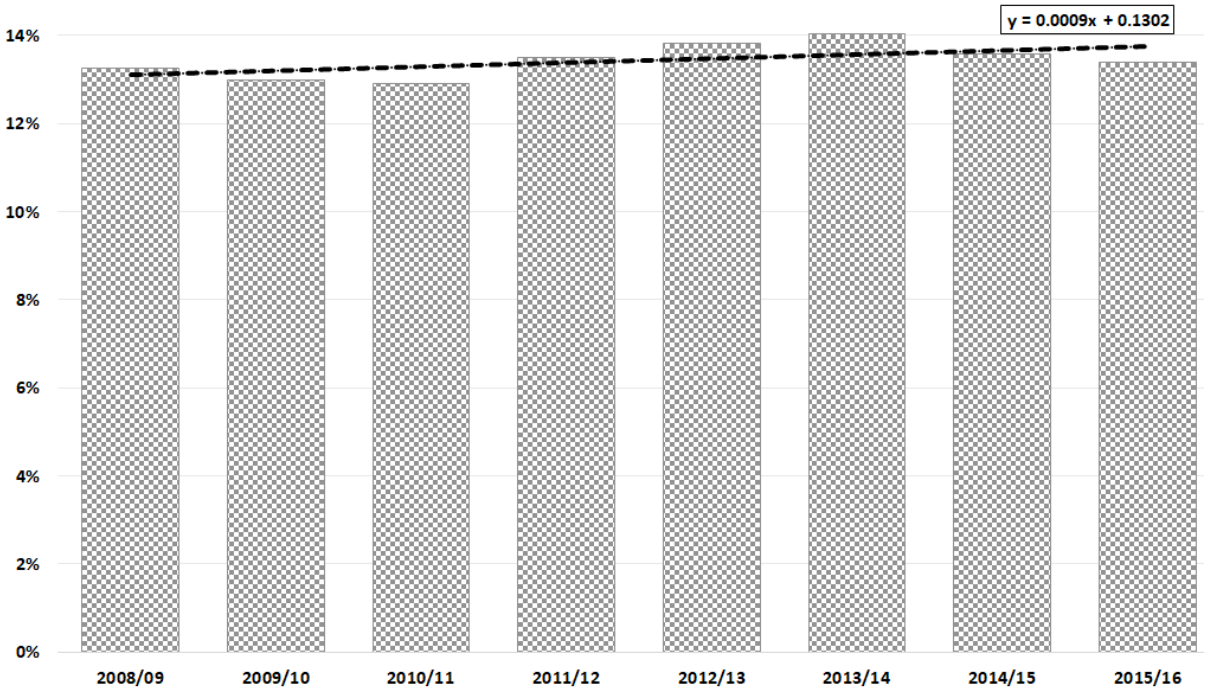


Source: Author's analysis of the HESA Staff Record 2008/09-2015/16
NB: The p-value for coefficient (0.0085) of the trend line is <0.01.

[71] Prior years cannot be analysed with the data accessible for this thesis.
[72] A Universities UK (2018) analysis of all professorial posts in the UK from 2009-10 through 2016/17 shows similarly that the professoriate remains predominantly both white and male, despite gradual improvement.
[73] In compliance with HESA's terms of data use, all headcount percentages are based on groups of more than 22.5 people, so no calculations have been suppressed.

According to Figure 6-2, the professoriate remains predominantly male despite having declined from 81.56% male in 2008/09 to 75.87% male in 2015/16. Mumford and Sechel's (2019) recent analysis of UK academic pay indicated that the higher concentration of men within the professoriate is a strong influence on the GPG and that the professoriate is the academic rank with the highest unexplained GPG, although their analysis was based solely within the economics discipline. However, their findings aligned with Bandiera et al.'s (2016) analysis of the salary of all academic staff at the London School of Economics; women were less likely than men to become professors, whilst the unexplained GPG was the largest amongst professors. These results make sense given what is known about academic pay systems. The academic pay structure is much more rigid up to the level of professor, due to its alignment with the national pay spine that has been agreed through sectoral collective bargaining. Professorial pay sits above pay spines and is subject to greater individualisation and potential discretion (Chapter 4). Pay setting that allows for greater discretion and individualisation is known to present a greater risk of generating pay inequalities, for instance in the context of the Swedish Karlstad University (Gonäs and Bergman, 2009). Analysis from the perspective of the Institute for Employment Studies further indicates that companies that seek to narrow their GPG should reduce individualised and discretionary pay setting (Brown 2019). Therefore, the predominant vertical segregation of men into the professorial ranks, where pay is not subject to collective bargaining, seems likely to contribute to the UK HE's continued pay inequality struggles.

Figure 6-3: Professors as a Proportion of All Full-Time UK Academic Staff



Source: Author's analysis of the HESA Staff Record 2008/09-2015/16
NB: The p-value for coefficient (0.0009) of the trend line is >0.05.

However, as Figure 6-3 demonstrates, the professoriate as a proportion of all full-time academic staff has remained stable—from 13.25% in 2008/09 to 13.39% in 2015/16. An OLS regression indicates that the minimally increasing trend line shown is not statistically significant. Therefore, it would be difficult to attribute the academic GPG over the analysis period to increasingly individualised pay. Essentially, the same proportion of the academic workforce has remained subject to a collectively bargained pay scale over the analysis period. However, the statistically significant trend of an increasing proportion of women newly entering the professoriate could form part of the explanation, as argued by the UCEA Chief Executive mentioned above (Grove, 2017a).

A second potentially augmenting force on academic pay inequality is change to the share of the workforce that may be in receipt of market supplements and discretionary pay (bonuses). These payments generate deviation from a transparent pay scale. As discussed in Chapter 4, market and retention supplements have been used in the UK HE sector for many years. These extra payments to attract or keep a prized member of staff are used "to cope either with distinctly robust demand for faculty in various disciplines or with the (sometimes potential) robust demand for individuals

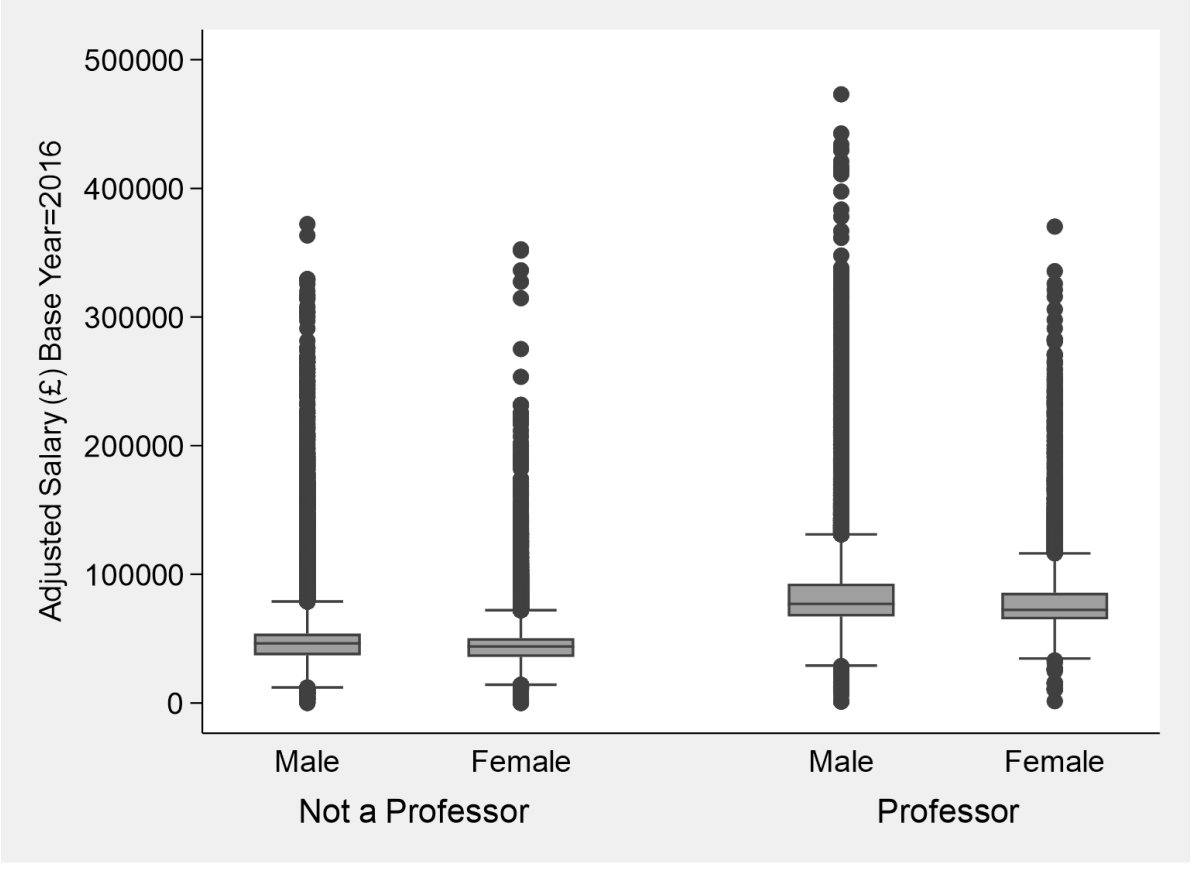
because of the excellence of their academic records" (Doucet, Durand and Smith, 2008, p. 69). They were already in use when the Framework Agreement that underpins the current national pay spine for the HE sector was being negotiated. Despite strong union objections, an employer-backed allowance for such "attraction and retention premia" payment was included in the final Agreement (NATFHE, 2005, p. 11). This was accompanied by union-backed monitoring guidance to help employers mitigate the potential inequality risks of using such payments (JNCHES, 2004). The poorly-justified retention payment practice of the UK's Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, was highlighted by the 2011 employment tribunal decision in response to Professor Liz Schafer's gender-based pay discrimination claim (Mills & Reeve LLP, 2012; Chilver, 2018). Ward's (2001) analysis of pay in 5 old British universities found that discretionary pay awards, separate to a transparent pay scale, did not have a significant impact on the GPG. However, no more recent academic analysis of bonus payments or the use of market supplements in UK HE could be identified. Furthermore, raw data on the use of such payments could not be identified through the HESA Staff Record or any other accessible sources.

As discussed in Chapter 4, whilst data on market supplements proves challenging to acquire, a report based on the HE employers' own data collected through the Higher Education Workforce Survey 2017, asserted that market supplements were used sparingly, but the report provided no actual analysis of that data (University and College Employer's Association, 2017). A search of 'market supplements' on the UCU (2020c) homepage also reveals no analysis of market supplement usage; the term returns only 15 hits, most of which are from 2007 or earlier. The most recent document, a 2018 guide for equal pay reviews and GPG reporting, essentially echoes the agreed guidance from the time of the Framework Agreement that universities ought to monitor their use of market supplements in order to help mitigate the equality risks of their use (New Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff, 2018). However, bonus pay awards have been found to present a significant concern for the GPG within the UK's financial sector (Healy and Ahamed, 2019). Furthermore, recent analysis has found evidence to support the concern that market supplements in the Canadian HE context (Doucet, Durand and Smith, 2008) and discretionary payments in the Australian HE context (Currie and Hill, 2013; Bailey *et al.*, 2016), do present inequality risks.

A third potentially augmenting force on HE pay inequality could be changes to the range of pay for particular grades, especially professors. Analysis has been conducted for this thesis on the pay ranges of full-time academic staff (those on teaching and/or research contracts) who are professors

and those who are not professors. These are the two job ranks that are directly identified in the HESA Staff Records, and this division is available for the academic years 2008/09 through 2015/16. First, a boxplot of annual salary for all full-time academic staff (those on teaching and/or research contracts) is provided to demonstrate major differences to pay ranges by professorial status and gender. This treats the data over the full analysis period as one sample. Annual salary has been inflated into real 2016 values using the Consumer Price Index from the UK's Office for National Statistics, which is consistent with other GPG analysis, such as Healy and Ahamed (2019). Secondly, analysis to assess changes to pay ranges is demonstrated. The interquartile range, which is the difference between the 25th and 75th percentile of salary, is used as a measure of the pay range for each grouping in this analysis. This provides a more stable basis than the absolute range of pay, due to outliers in the data. These analyses together indicate that the range of pay is wider for professors than non-professors—and wider for men than women—but provide little evidence of dramatic widening or narrowing of the pay ranges over time.[74]

Figure 6-4: UK Full-Time Academic Salary 2008/2009 through 2015/2016



[74] In compliance with HESA's terms of data use, all interquartile ranges and boxplots of salary (types of averages) are based on more than 7 individuals, so none are suppressed.

Source: Author's analysis of the HESA Staff Record 2008/09-2015/16

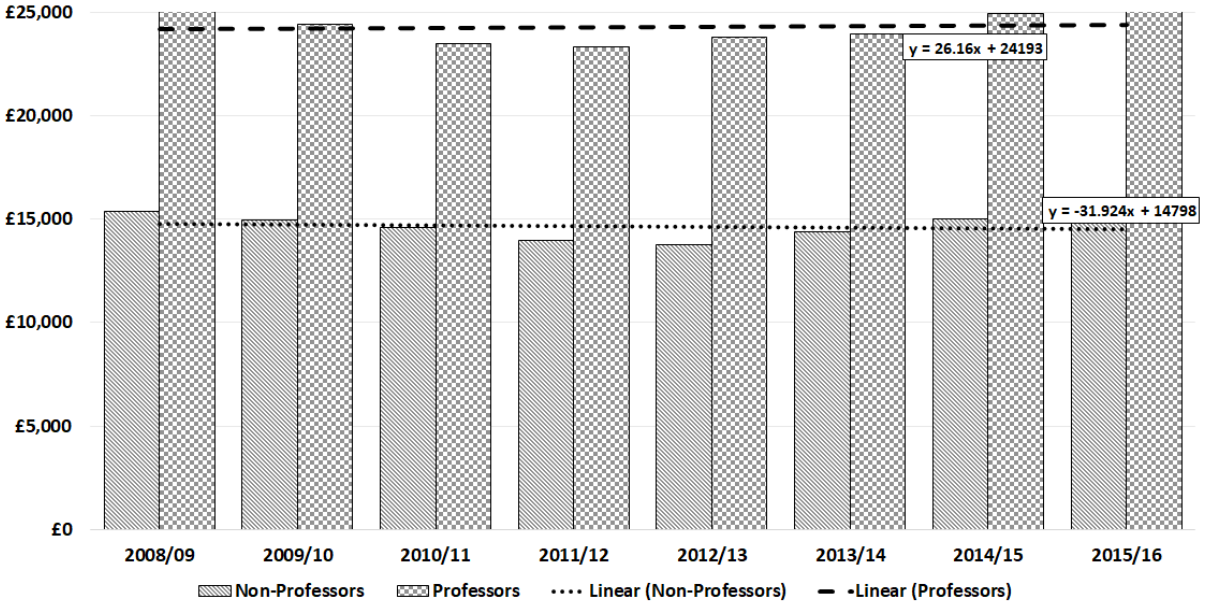
Boxplots provide a standardised method to visualise pay ranges by academic rank and gender, which has been used, for instance, in Li et al.'s (2019) analysis of the GPG in the US HE sector. The pay ranges for academic staff by professorial status and gender are visualised through boxplots in Figure 6-4. The horizontal lines running through each box represent the median salary. As already anticipated by the GPG analysis using the HESA Staff Record in Chapter 4, the median salary for women is lower than for men within both the non-professor and professor groupings. The bounded vertical lines show the pay ranges excluding outliers[75] and the horizontal bounds of the boxes show the interquartile range of pay for each grouping. Both methods illustrate that the pay range is wider for professors than for non-professors. Pay ranges are also wider for men than women within both the non-professor and the professor groupings. Considering this analysis is filtered to include only full-time academic staff, the considerable distribution, particularly of high outliers[76], may indicate some surprising variation from established pay scales for a select few staff.

As previously discussed, research has indicated that the male-dominated professorial rank has the widest unexplained GPG (Bandiera, Rana and Xu, 2016; Mumford and Sechel, 2019). The Prondzynski (2012) Review of Higher Education Governance strongly advised universities to apply pay scales to all university staff—including professors and senior management—in order to meet the equality compliance aims of the Framework Agreement. Yet, professorial pay still sits above the nationally agreed pay scale. It is therefore notable to confirm here, as expected, that the range for professorial pay is wider than for all non-professorial academics. This is important because research across many national contexts indicates that wage compression, which is often achieved through trade union collective bargaining or minimum wage laws that raise the floor of low pay, is associated with a narrowing of the GPG (Blau and Kahn, 1996; Kahn, 2015). The following analysis, however, does not demonstrate notable widening or narrowing of pay ranges over the analysis period.

[75] Pay ranges shown in the boxplot are minimum-bound by the 25th percentile salary minus (1.5*interquartile range) and are maximum-bound by the 75th percentile salary plus (1.5*interquartile range). Data points beyond this defined range are shown as outliers.

[76] These outliers may accurately reflect variation in pay, although they may also reflect university data entry errors, such as miscoding of the vice-chancellor or other members of senior management. Further investigation into these outliers was not possible in the scope of this thesis.

Figure 6-5: Interquartile Ranges for UK Academic Pay (2016 value)

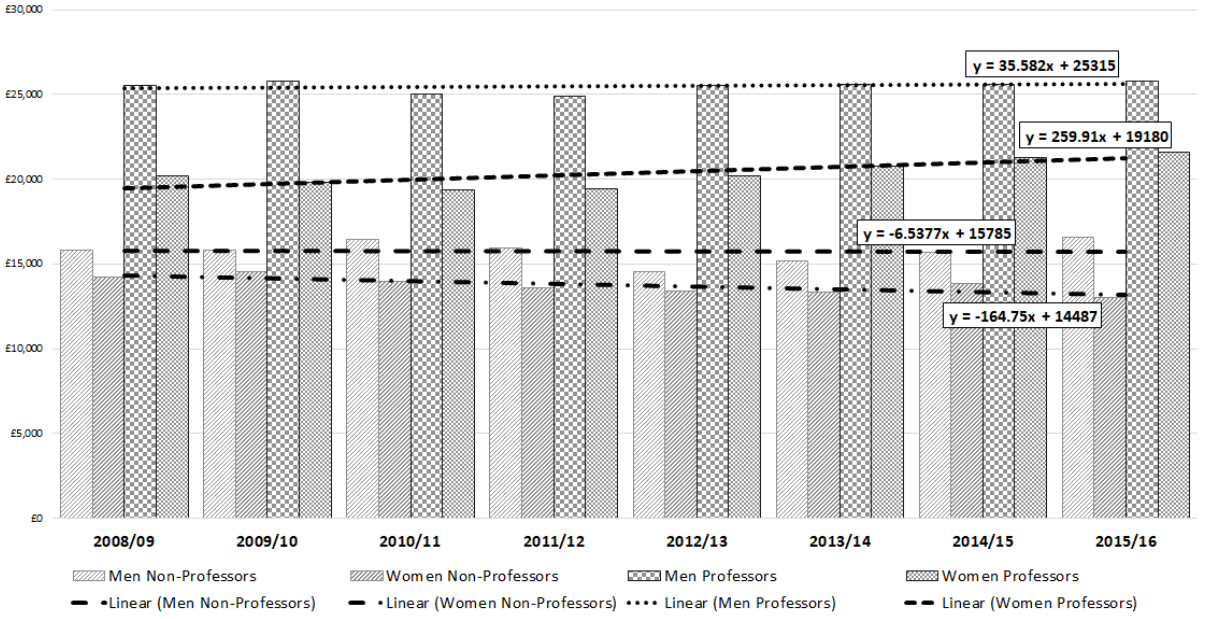


Source: Author's analysis of the HESA Staff Record 2008/09-2015/16

NB: The p-value for the coefficients (0.2616 and -31.924) of both trend lines is >0.05.

Figure 6-5 builds on the previous analysis with a focus on the interquartile range to explore any change over time. However, the figure demonstrates that there is no statistically significant trend of either widening or narrowing of the pay ranges for either professors or non-professors.

Figure 6-6: Interquartile Range for UK Academic Pay by Gender (2016 Value)



Source: Author's analysis of the HESA Staff Record 2008/09-2015/16

NB: The p-value for the coefficients (-6.5377 and 35.582) of both male trend lines is >0.05;

The p-value for the coefficients (-164.75 and 259.91) of both female trend lines is <0.05.

Figure 6-6 disaggregates the previous interquartile range analysis by gender. This analysis illustrates that the pay ranges have not significantly widened or narrowed for male academics or for all non-professors and all professors. However, there is a statistically significant, although gradual, widening of the pay range for women professors, and the opposite for women non-professors. Figures 6-4 through 6-6 do not provide evidence to suggest that *changes* to the pay ranges account for the persistent GPG. However, the consistently wider pay range within the professoriate, widest for male professors, *does* strengthen previously discussed concerns about the male-dominated professoriate as a contributing factor to academic pay inequality.

A final force that may account for continued HE pay inequality is the impact of the REF on recruitment and pay strategies. As discussed in Chapter 4, the REF determines access to significant UK government research funds, and universities have put in place increasingly demanding research performance targets on academics in order to game the metric (Morrish, 2016). Nevertheless, the REF exercise is commonly acknowledged by those in the sector to sharply impact recruitment and pay strategies. This burden is felt particularly keenly by early-career academics who are too often caught in a double-bind of taking on fixed-term teaching-only contracts to survive in the present, but because their "teaching time is contractually prioritised over research time" they struggle to progress essential publications that are needed to secure permanent employment in the future (Peters and Turner, 2014, p. 2322). Munir et al.'s (2013) assessment of Athena SWAN identified the REF as an external pressure on departments, which some staff felt actively worked against gender equality goals. One of their respondents remarked:

> I think the REF's got a huge amount to answer for because we've got an increase in the number of professors and a decrease in the proportion of women because basically, as far as I can tell, the school's gone and hired a whole load of bigwig male professors on sort of 20% positions to bulk up our REF return and I just think this is demoralising. I think that if the school and the university seriously wanted to sustain careers they would be investing in the longer term in the staff they've got and not bringing in these 20% people that are just totally transient. (Munir *et al.*, 2013, p. 127)

The prevalence of 'poaching' recruitment behaviour by universities was of sufficiently widespread concern that the prominent Stern Review in July 2016 recommended ending the portability of REF-reportable research outputs to new institutions to discourage this cyclical practice (Stern, 2016). Nevertheless, this change does not lay to rest the inequalities concerns about the academic

publication process on which the REF is based. There are well-documented inequalities concerns with the academic publication process (Miller and Mctavish, 2011; Knobloch-Westerwick, Glynn and Huge, 2013; Hengel, 2017), academic citations, which are seen as an impact metric (Maliniak, Powers and Walter, 2013; King *et al.*, 2017), the inflated publication standards to which BAME academics feel they are held to for promotion (Bhopal, 2015), and academic journal rankings themselves (Özbilgin, 2009).

Conversely, union-led collective bargaining for pay across the sector ought to have constrained pay inequality. Union membership and collective bargaining coverage has been shown to reduce the GPG in other employment contexts; nevertheless, augmenting factors may still preserve inequality (Healy and Ahamed, 2019). In the HE context, some of these augmenting factors may particularly include, the higher concentration of men in the professoriate where pay is not covered by collective bargaining, the use of discretionary pay awards and market supplements, and the influence of the REF on recruitment and pay strategies. The extent to which these factors augment pay inequality, despite the presence of a transparent pay scale, certainly merits further scrutiny, but it is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Analysis of the 2007-2017 THE publications demonstrated that Universities Alpha and Beta performed similarly to the HE sector in terms of the GPG. The GPG at the two institutions ran consistently at, or slightly wider than, the gap for all UK public universities. This analysis suggests that the OSEs experienced inside these two institutions are not extreme outliers from the HE sector. Whilst vertical segregation can help to explain some of the gap in a manner that is legally defensible (Szyszczak, 1985), it can also indicate inequalities concerns with recruitment or promotion systems (Kirton and Greene, 2016). Several additional factors that may help to account for the pay inequality trends experienced within HE have been described. Whilst these augmenting forces are separate to the forces of the 'pay transparency' agenda on which this thesis is focused, the performance of 'pay transparency' inside universities may help to obscure their impact. In light of this analysis, the broad claims of pay and promotion transparency within UK HE demand the critical scrutiny that this thesis provides, based on social pay comparison behaviour and pay and promotion experiences inside Universities Alpha and Beta. The remainder of this chapter will explore the extent to which the

relative formalisation of the institutional setting of these workplaces serves as a symbolic signal of inclusive employment practices, rather than a practical driver of equality.

6.5 Data Transparency: Visibility of Organisational Inequality (OSE Theme One)

A number of regulative and voluntary compliance pressures have been developing in recent years, which should have encouraged UK HE institutions to become more transparent about their employment practices and to develop more inclusive workplaces (Chapter 4). Regulative compliance pressure has come from the mandate on universities as large, tax-payer supported employers to produce transparent documentation about the employment experiences of staff, disaggregated by protected characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, and gender. The use and impact of such documentation in Universities Alpha and Beta created the opportunity to analyse the institutions through the lens of Acker's (2006b, 2006a) inequality regime component: visibility of inequality and the first OSE theme: data transparency. Acker (2006b) asserted that inequality is less visible to the dominant or privileged members of an organisation than to those who experience disadvantage, such as on the basis of gender, race, or class. However, the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) placed regulative compliance pressure on UK universities to become more transparent and thus equitable employers, in part, by producing reports that make inequality visible (Chapter 4). Compliance with these regulations presents an opportunity to make inequality visible in a concrete way, to all staff, regardless of privilege. However, the risk is that the compliance is low and poorly enforced or, perhaps worse, becomes a tick-box exercise of the type suggested by Ahmed's (2007, p. 111) critique that UK university equality and diversity work has become embedded within 'performance culture' to actively obscure bad performance.

6.5.1 Public Sector Equality Duty Compliance: A Window or a Smokescreen?

Acker (2006a, p. 109) created the inequality regimes concept to illustrate the "interconnecting organisational processes that produce and maintain racialized and gendered class relations." The organisational processes of recording, analysing, and publishing staff data by protected characteristics, present critical opportunities to break down the barriers that allow the privileged to remain blind to their own privilege (Acker, 2006a) by creating a public, written record of inequality in the organisation. However, these processes can also obscure inequality by creating the impression that the institution has documented the problem when it has not (or not done so well). Measuring visibility of inequality requires more nuance than simply pointing to a report on a university website. The question is not just what data is produced but how is it presented and perceived (or not) within the institution, and what (if any) change comes about as a result?

As summarised in Table 6-1, University Alpha's policy documents presented a commitment to the transparency agenda, stimulated by years of expectations to comply with the PSED specific duties for England that were brought into force on September 10, 2011 (Brill, 2011). The institution's equality and diversity strategy was publicly available online. The multi-year strategy document, which included the academic year 2016/17, contained a clear acknowledgement of the institution's PSED obligations, specifically noting the necessity to publish annual reports on staff by protected characteristics. However, the implementation was less robust. Annual staff diversity reports had ceased when less frequent equal pay audits production began, although the audits included a similar breadth of protected characteristics, not only gender. The institution also publicly released the entirety of these comprehensive equal pay audit reports.

University Beta similarly made its multi-year equality and diversity strategy document publicly available online. This strategic document also included 2016/17 and contained a general acknowledgement of the institution's PSED general duty. The document contained a plan to implement annual GPG reporting, in anticipation of the 2017 revised PSED specific duties for England. The institution had published annual staff diversity reports, which promisingly had included a breadth of protected characteristics and even annualised promotion outcomes. However, the institution had ceased publication of these reports several years before 2016/17 and had not replaced them with any alternative, much to the frustration of the Beta UCU committee. Whether this problem was due to a lack of resource commitment by senior management, poor database infrastructure, or intentional obfuscation, could not be confirmed. However, it became clear during interviews that this shortcoming was part of a systemic struggle that Beta faced with institutional data. This deficiency is the most likely explanation as to why the strategy document contained an action to develop a working group to plan for timely publication of equality data. The presence of this action indicated that achieving this level of new data transparency would require significant effort. Furthermore, unlike Alpha, Beta had not yet begun to implement a regular schedule for equal pay audits. Beta had only completed one partial audit by 2016/17, which only included staff affected by the Framework Agreement (JNCHES, 2004). As professorial pay is not covered by sectoral collective bargaining, it was not included. In further contrast, Beta only published summary details of this audit, rather than a comprehensive report.

Given the greater degree of formalised transparent staff data reporting by protected characteristics, at University Alpha, although it was not perfect, one might have expected to observe stronger perceptions of equality, or at least stronger perceptions that the university was acknowledging its

shortcomings and working to reduce discrimination and to promote equality there than at University Beta. This was not the case. As previously demonstrated, the all-academic GPG had remained consistently slightly above the national average in both institutions during the decade leading up to 2016/17. For the professorial GPG, University Alpha had a wider gap than the national average, which was getting worse. In contrast, the professorial GPG in University Beta was narrower than the national average, and it was getting even better. These aggregate figures suggest that there was opportunity for PSED-linked reporting to make inequality visible. Although University Alpha appears to have a more established regime for pay and representation data transparency, serious deficits and concerns emerged in both institutions.

University Alpha was one of many UK universities that chose to implement professorial pay banding following the landmark employment tribunal at Royal Holloway (Chapter 4). University Alpha's published guidance on professorial banding described the scheme as an effort to promote fairness, equality, diversity, and transparency. Does the professorial banding exercise promote these things, or has it become a post-hoc justification for existing and persisting gender-based pay disparity, which has worsened since its implementation?

Alpha UCU representatives explained that Alpha's regular equal pay audits had never been able to report the GPG in the top professorial pay band because there were initially no women and later, still too few to meet data protection requirements. This suggests that the vertical segregation problem across the academic workforce in HE (Teelken and Deem, 2013), commonly described as a 'leaky pipeline' in regards to woman and BAME academics (Bhopal, Brown and Jackson, 2015, p. 40), was being replicated within the Alpha professoriate.

Yet, Alpha senior management had resisted pressure from the UCU committee to make professorial banding outcomes transparent, which would make this vertical segregation visible. The senior management had suggested that professors themselves would oppose the practice. When questioned about this reluctance, an Alpha policy shaper explained that "We don't talk about somebody going from band [X] to band [Y] any more than we talk about giving a lecturer an accelerated increment." However, the same policy shaper went on to explain that University Alpha considers the professors on different bands to be doing fundamentally different jobs, so the comparison of professors on two different bands is more like comparing the pay of senior lecturers and readers, rather than comparing the pay of two lecturers on different spinal points. The Alpha policy shaper argued that Alpha's growing professorial GPG, reflected in the THE pay survey, is misleading:

> They look at the very crude academic grades, so, lecturer, senior lecturer, professor…When you look at our [N] bands of professors, so this is how people are measured against very clear criteria, at any one level, there is no significant gender pay gap. When you add them all together, what you find is that there are more men at the higher level and so when you add all the data together and you don't stratify the data, it looks like…there's a gender pay gap. The assumption then is that somehow, you're making poor judgments about these people. I would argue the system is robust. It's clear. It's transparent. That's the first thing. The second thing is that at the professorial level, we are talking about [X] different sorts of jobs. So, our view is, if you are a professor at [the bottom band], you are not doing the same job as a professor [at the top band]. So, to add [all the professorial bands] together and say there's a gender pay gap, it's like adding apples and pears and oranges and saying we've got the number 27 coming out at the end. It doesn't mean anything.

The shaper doubled down on the transparency and robustness of the banding system, while further describing clear vertical segregation within it, and using segregation as an argument that Alpha does not have a professorial GPG problem. While it is good practice to try to explain aggregate gaps by things like tenure and qualifications, professors are treated as a single category across the THE pay survey. This is a reasonable approach for the THE to take, as there is no reason to believe that the job (or jobs, as the Alpha policy shaper indicated) of professor are substantially different at Alpha than at other universities across the UK.

If the top and bottom professorial bands were fundamentally different jobs, it would seem rational to make the banding public, in the same manner as for lecturers, senior lecturers, and readers. Rather, professorial banding serves a similar, although more hidden, role as an academic promotion below the professoriate. Similar to the critique of academic promotion logic articulated earlier, the inconsistency with this policy shaper's justification of professorial banding is that a top band professor is not demoted if they cease to repeat achievements that earned them the top slot. The pay of a certain band of professor is, therefore, not directly tied to the activities that their job requires. Professorial banding, like academic promotion, largely rewards subjectively assessed past achievements, which again weakens the validity of traditional job evaluation language as a tool to justify differences in pay between different levels of professor. Given the uncritical description of professorial gender segregation by the policy shaper, there is reason to worry that Alpha's equal pay audits conceal rather than reveal inequality problems.

A UCU representative remarked of this auditing process that "It's a branding exercise for the university, and it doesn't fix the underlying problems. I think there is enough data to show we have quite severe problems. Ok, they're across HE, but we're certainly very bad in terms of gender and I think in terms of BME." When asked how the UCU committee has tried to push Alpha to become more transparent, another representative succinctly explained that "We constantly asked,

constantly, for information broken down by protected characteristics on promotion and on pay, particularly with respect to professorial banding and we have found it extremely difficult to get information." The equality and diversity reports Alpha published before beginning equal pay audits did not include promotion analysis.

Although University Beta did not have professorial banding, a similar perception that data was difficult to crack emerged from policy shapers and the union alike. One policy shaper said of equalities data in Beta:

> It's an issue which is exhausting. I mean talking about data is exhausting, not because data is exhausting, but because the inaccessibility of data at [University Beta] is such a substantial, vast problem that I think it actively inhibits progress in the whole of the institution. Unfortunately, all I have received, even in discussions with the [VC] about this is a kind of shoulder shrug, well, yeah, data is a problem.

The shaper worried that indifference from the centre of the university was generating growing hostility between the unions and the institution. They expressed concern that management was also too prone to cite data protection with small numbers in quantitative data as a reason for ignoring BAME academics, observing:

> If [University Beta] as an institution valued qualitative analysis more as a source of data…it would see that there is a very significant problem. It really worries me what I've heard. It's very hard for me to see how the experiences of BAME female academics, the persons I've spoken to, it's hard for me to see it in any other light. I can't see how it could be anything other than discrimination. And this is not because people come up to me and say I've been experiencing discrimination. It's because they've come up to me and talked about an on-going systemic problem, or set of problems, because it's always very complete, that they've been experiencing for years and years and years. It's really alarming.

The University Beta UCU committee shared these data concerns, having submitted several Freedom of Information requests to try and retrieve several years of missing staff equality and diversity reports that the university stopped releasing. One committee member described their motivation:

> [University Beta] is constantly claiming that this is a diverse place to work and study, and it isn't. What do they mean by that? They are using that as a way to extract money from people of colour, by saying you should come here, using it to encourage people to apply to work here, so they can extract more labour from people of colour, and they're using images of ethnic diversity in their marketing to extract money from people of colour and to encourage them to come here. So, it's extremely colonial.

After their requests proved unyielding, the union launched a public petition, which finally led to partial disclosure. However, the released data was aggregated across the missing years, rendering it useless for observing trends as previous reports had been annual. A union representative explained:

> They've pretended they they're going to put the data up and they're going to put the data up for the past [several] years, but they actually haven't, and they won't even tell us why they haven't…Have they lost the data? Do they have a system that is, you know, is there something wrong with their IT system? Are they short-staffed?…Can we even trust the data that they're giving us at this point?

The representative went on to explain that this experience was typical; when the UCU committee requests data relating to pay and equalities, "they will either ignore us, or they'll say we're already doing this, and then not do it. Or they'll say yes, we'll do it, and then they won't do it. So, it's very unsatisfactory."

Although both universities had clearly and publicly acknowledged their data transparency duties under the PSED, their actual implementation appeared to be weak. It is striking that the university with the widening professorial GPG, Alpha, had already embedded equal pay audits. Both UCU committees expressed frustration with accessing staff data broken down by protected characteristics, particularly when seeking ethnicity data or anything besides sex. This section of analysis has illuminated the risk that incomplete and inconsistent transparency of equalities data, whether stemming from a deliberate strategy or poor management, serves to obscure inequality, while the institution purports to make it visible.

6.5.2 Head of Department Radical Pay Access: Transparency for What Purpose?

When asked what pro-active steps their institutions took to make pay processes more visible, most academics at both institutions struggled to recollect examples of active pay transparency. However, heads of department (HoDs)[77] at both institutions had access to radical pay transparency within their departments – but only within their departments. A Beta HoD expressed similar scepticism to other academics about the active creation of pay transparency inside the wider university. They noted that "the basis for that is that I don't know what pay is in other [departments]. So, if I don't know what pay is in other [departments], that means I don't have the information. I don't know where I would look. I'm not sure I would be told if I asked." While most academics must rely, sometimes frustratingly so, on institutionally published documents, such as staff diversity reports and equal pay audits, in order to see aggregate inequality made concretely visible through data, this small group of hierarchically privileged academics had access to a slice of radical pay transparency of those immediately around them. Acker (2006b) observed that supervisors may play a role in subtly reducing or strengthening inequalities through their interactions with those they supervise.

[77] Demographics of HoD interviewees will not be attributed when they are being referred to as HoDs in this thesis, to protect their anonymity.

Therefore, it is important in the HE context to analyse what HoDs do with their privileged access to individuals' pay information.

HoDs had access to the pay data of everyone who worked within their department, creating the potential for them to observe inequality, within their departmental microcosm, to a degree of detail that is otherwise only accessible to HR professionals. This radical transparency affords HoDs the potential capacity to become agents of change in departments, if they observe individuals or groups of academics who, despite the appearance of a transparent pay scale, are being paid less than similarly situated colleagues. However, Alexander's (2015) typology of workplace information provided a theoretical explanation for the apparent general lack of corrective action by HoDs in these case studies. Taking the workers' perspective on revealed hidden information at work, Alexander (2015, p. 182) argued that "information is thus instrumental: transparency mandates are designed with the first-order goal of revealing the true conditions under which workers are employed, but also with the second-order goal of prompting regulatory or market responses to improve those conditions." Thus, HoDs can only create such an outcome if they are motivated to assess pay by protected characteristics and have the power to do something about it.

Regarding the motivation to assess pay, a clear divide between the institutions emerged. Of the three Alpha HoDs interviewed, none expressed having had any inclination towards assessing the systemic fairness of pay in their department. The data with which they were provided, did not include protected characteristics, just the name and spinal point (or pay band for professors) of each member of staff. One HoD described having only looked at the pay data for a logistical reason—to ensure an employee on a fixed-term contract had their contract renewed at the same spinal point. Even then, the HoD admitted that "I didn't bother to find out how much that was." The other two HoDs had taken a deeper look at the data but without any intention of assessing fairness of pay by protected characteristics. One HoD said they looked at the data primarily to get an understanding of how much money the institution was spending on staff in their department as part of the overall budgeting process. However, they did recall being surprised about pay differences amongst three white staff members who had received the same academic promotion at the same time. One of the three, a man, was a point above the other two, a man and a woman. They remarked:

> That was a bit of a surprise because I didn't know that could happen until that point. I knew that you could get contribution points because you can apply to the committee to be considered for a contributory point or to get an extra increment or to accelerate more quickly at any time, but I was surprised about this case because I remember when they were all promoted. It wasn't that long ago, and I was then surprised why that person might have managed to negotiate a bit better than the other two.

The remaining HoD said they looked at the data out of general interest and only looked at professorial pay. They acknowledged that "I didn't pay any attention to gender or anything like that. I was just looking, oh, this person gets quite a lot. Oh, that person gets this. Oh, I would have thought this person got more. That's all. It's just general interest, really."

Conversely, all three Beta HoDs had assessed the fair distribution of pay in their departments, particularly as it pertained to professorial pay. A structural finance distinction between the two institutions may help to explain this divergence. Payroll was part of a central budget at Alpha, while it was decentralised to departments at Beta. However, this factor did not lead to consistent impact on pay disparities, suggesting that HoDs still did not feel particularly empowered as change agents, even in Beta.

The first HoD felt that the data indicated a quite discretionary salary appointment practice. It appeared that the previous HoD had appointed at inconsistent spinal points relative to prior experience, and there was clear evidence that staff on teaching-focused contracts were being treated inequitably in the allocation of their workload. Some 'favourites' of senior staff had been co-opted to support research, leaving the remaining teaching-focused staff to shoulder heavier workloads than their contracts prescribed. While the HoD did not characterise this as a matter of discrimination based on protected characteristics, barriers to advancement in UK academia for BAME staff, especially female BAME scholars, has been attributed elsewhere to perceptions of being left out of the so-called 'in-group' or 'club' (P. Miller, 2016, p. 210). Nevertheless, this HoD did not describe taking concrete steps to remedy what they found:

> So all I've done is to try and make things more transparent and to try and instil a culture of fairness and kind of collegiality and really instil, in my department, a sense that we will all succeed together or, there's a greater chance of us all succeeding together rather than to kind of create a competition that creates kind of perverse incentives.

Acker (2006b) would not have been surprised to see individualised pay decisions, diverging from collectively-agreed pay setting practices. However, the HoD's proposed solution displayed a surprising level of confidence in the system, which they had just acknowledged had allowed for a high degree of individual deals that created unfair outcomes. This underscores Alexander's (2015) point that information transparency is not 'self-actuating.'

The other two Beta HoDs had focused on professorial pay analysis and observed, what appeared to them, to be evidence of unexplained disadvantage for some female professors, although neither had analysed pay by ethnicity. However, only one felt empowered to try to narrow the gap directly. The

first HoD recalled that "the two highest paid members of staff were actually women, but then there was all the men in the sort of [higher range], like ALL the men. And then [in the lower range] were all the rest of the women, apart from one or two very junior male members of staff." The HoD had discussed their concern with their dean, who had expressed that the pattern was partly explained by the fact that most of the female professors had been promoted internally, while most of the male professors had been recruited as professors to drive REF scores. That is a striking affirmation of the suspicion that secrecy of professorial pay obscures structural causes of pay inequality, while also demonstrating the influence of REF-based recruitment strategies on the GPG. This HoD's only remedial actions to this problem were to encourage women to apply for promotion and to provide examples from the HoD's own experience about what had helped them increase their pay as a professor, which was publishing books and securing large grants. Interestingly, the HoD mentioned that their department was preparing to apply for an Athena SWAN award, and this would likely spur further work on pay equality.

The other HoD was the only one of all six HoDs interviewed across both universities who reported having taken proactive steps to narrow the GPG. The HoD acknowledged that preparation had been underway for the department's first Athena SWAN award when they became head, which had motivated their systematic efforts. Although the HoD remembered feeling a sense of relief that pay looked generally fair across the ranks, they did focus in on professorial pay because that is where the most discretion is possible. The head observed several clusters within the professorial pay that broadly seemed to make sense based on tenure, research, and academic leadership taken on by those within them:

> But one thing I did notice was that within those bunches, quite often there was a female colleague who was at the bottom of the bunch. So, when it came to professorial review time…I did systematically go through and if there was a female colleague at the bottom of the bunch and I couldn't see a good reason why, I picked a male colleague who I thought had similar performance and characteristics and I made a case to match their salary. So, in the end, that was actually just two people…it's not a big uplift, but it actually was enough to generate conversation at the faculty level as to why I thought this was reasonable…The other part of it, was, just by chance, well, I assume by chance, the two most recently promoted professors in the school were women and I noticed they had been, when they were promoted, they were sort of automatically put on a very low level in the professorial scale and so when I saw that distribution, those two really were outliers. They were very low. So, I got market supplements for them in an off-cycle way. I just did it.

The net result of those two efforts by the HoD was a narrowing of the department's professorial GPG by several percentage points. The HoD reflected that no one else in the department knew of these efforts as they happened. Of course, the four women would have known about their

individual pay rise but they would not have known about the systematic review from which they benefitted. A brief mention of the review effort and the net impact on the GPG in the department's Athena SWAN application was the only formal communication to anyone else in the department about this activity. The HoD had also promised to conduct a similar exercise for academics below the professoriate, which would first require manually appending gender to the pay data provided by the institution, as they had done for professors, but expressed a desire for guidance as to how to implement this more complex promise. The HOD also noted they had not attempted to analyse pay by ethnicity, which they felt would present further difficulty in terms of determining a consistent categorisation.

When told that a Beta HoD had reported observing inequality concerns in their data, an Alpha HoD expressed surprise and indicated that HoDs at University Alpha did not possess power over pay decisions:

> I never thought about looking at people's pay to see whether their pay, you know, whether there are inequalities in pay. This has now made me think that perhaps I should go and have a look because I haven't really because I just, I suppose I had assumed that if the principle of appointing you on to a scale that's better than the one that you were on works, then I would have assumed that happened to everybody else in my department, because that happened to me when I was first employed here…I was employed on a higher scale than I was before and the way pay, I think, the people who decide on your pay scale is HR. It's not [the HoD].

Echoing this belief in where power to make pay decisions lies, another Alpha HoD said if they were to observe apparent unfairness in pay, their only recourse would be to encourage the affected employee to apply for a performance-related pay increment or a promotion**.** This was strikingly similar to the conclusions of two of the three Beta heads, although they had observed what they felt to be problematic pay data patterns. The opportunity for HoDs to turn the visibility of inequality, revealed to them through slices of radical pay transparency, into action to narrow inequality, was constrained by the performance of the pay 'transparency agenda' at the level of the setting. The HoDs primarily considered the perceived transparent process of academic progression to be the optimal solution to the problems they observed, although those same processes had led to the problematic data. Thus, the mixed motivation and power of HoDs to observe pay inequality problems around them and achieve any concrete remedy, illustrates the limitations of even radical pay transparency to narrow the GPG. The radical transparency afforded to HoDs was not designed to move beyond providing firm-specific information to relate to context information, such as conditions at other universities or substantive equalities law. If it were, the data HoDs received

would also, for example, include demographic details rather than just names and pay information (Alexander, 2015).

6.6 EDI Accreditation: Legitimacy of Inequality (OSE Theme Two)

Another pressure on universities to create some form of transparency, stems from the voluntary compliance pressure that is exerted by external awards that recognise good employment equality practice, such as the Athena SWAN award and the Race Equality charter (Gregory-Smith, 2017; Bhopal and Pitkin, 2018). This voluntary compliance pressure will be analysed through the lens of Acker's (2006b, 2006a) inequality regime component: legitimacy of inequality and the second OSE theme: EDI accreditation. Although EDI accreditations are voluntary, as there is no legal requirement to comply, universities seek them out to gain reputational kudos. Awardee institutions can reference their status on their website and marketing material to highlight their organisational commitment to equality and diversity to potential students. Important funding streams have also begun to require these awards, which places significant financial pressure on universities to at least be seen to be doing the right thing (Chapter 4).

Acker (2006b) theorised a relationship between visibility and legitimacy. She argued that high visibility and low legitimacy of inequalities present the greatest opportunity to reform inequality regimes. The opposite emerged in these case studies, which provides an inequality regimes-based explanation for the limited impact of pay 'transparency agenda' performance. Universities Alpha and Beta provided the impression of high visibility of inequality through their data reporting strategies; yet, the common critique of poor data access and the practice of giving HoDs pay data without accompanying demographic information indicated low visibility in practise. Furthermore, the awarding of equality accreditations presents a high degree of legitimacy to existing arrangements. Inequality made visible, as previously explored, whatever the data reveals, can be validated by such external accolades. As illustrated by the vastness of academic research on many facets of workplace inequality, the subject is complex. Most people are not experts. The vernacular of Olympic medals, including bronze, silver, and gold, next to phrases like gender equality and race equality is enough to legitimate institutional efforts to many. Furthermore, the requirements and recommendations of funding bodies to require or encourage these awards, as evidence of embedding equality and diversity principles, gives them further apparent legitimating power.

6.6.1 Athena SWAN: A Means to Legitimate Inequality Regimes

The Athena SWAN award is a voluntary recognition that departments and universities may achieve, which recognises commitment to and progress on gender equality principles for staff and students.

Possession of an Athena SWAN award sends a legitimating message to staff and the public that the organisation has embedded strong gender equality principles (Gregory-Smith, 2017). Both institutions held an institutional Athena SWAN award in 2016/17, although actors throughout both universities expressed concern that the process had become a behemoth exercise in form filling, crowding out capacity or will to change practices.

Turning first to University Alpha, their most recent institutional Athena SWAN application highlighted several areas for improvement, including unfavourable equal pay compared to many other UK universities, and offered the equal pay audit process discussed previously as a means to identify the problem and to establish actions for remedy. It is noteworthy that the successful application also framed equalities work as a cost, not an investment. It cautioned that the action plan had to be tempered by considerable financial limitations facing the HE sector. Acker (2006a, p. 121) observed that "appeals to 'the market' and to the necessity for coordination, efficiency, and productivity often legitimate inequality regimes." Policy shapers shared this perception of Athena SWAN as a cost, describing the application process itself as burdensome and monstrous. One shaper, who acknowledged that universities initially had to engage with Athena SWAN because of the requirements of certain funding bodies, went on to remark:

> Now, it's just become a huge bureaucratic exercise that takes up a massive amount of effort, and for not a lot of reward, I think…It's become this monstrous thing that takes a huge amount of time. In fact, we're even thinking of having more staff, I mean, I could do with a lot more staff to be able to do very useful things, but we're thinking of more staff just to feed the Athena SWAN beast.

Another policy shaper explained that "The schemes try to become so comprehensive, they then become burdensome and all you do is worry about the scheme and you don't worry about the issue that the scheme is designed to address."

Echoing concerns of policy makers but with added scepticism, a UCU representative expressed concerns that the award application was standing in for the work it was meant to report, illustrating Ahmed's (2007) characterisation of equalities documents standing for actually doing equalities work. The representative observed:

> So, the issue, you know, look, giving out awards for doing a great job, that's like a substitute for actually doing a great job…At best, it's like teaching to the test when they've set up specific criteria. So, like, if the criteria for Athena SWAN had been elimination of the gender pay gap, we wouldn't have one.

Another representative further observed of University Alpha that "Their defences are up and they're putting in for things that will make them look better, like Athena SWAN. You know, going through the motions. It doesn't mean you're achieving anything. It just means you're doing something." When asked whether the institutional Athena SWAN had an impact on the transparency of pay and progression at Alpha, UCU representatives consulted did not feel it had. One committee member expressed concern that despite the presentation of promotion data analysis in the application, promotion practices remained problematic:

> I think [the data analysis] has increased [senior management's] defensiveness and desire to cover up or come up with other explanations, which aren't really explanations or appropriate explanations. I don't think it's stopped them still blocking the promotion of people they just don't feel are quite right. We find ourselves doing an awful lot of casework for women, and people with disabilities, LGBT…Interestingly, when I supported people who hadn't got the results they felt they should have on professorial banding, I was supporting just as many men as women, but I more often won my cases for the men. It was like you were pushing on a partly open door when you were fighting the cases for the men. It was much harder for the women.

A variety of academics painted a similar picture of an institution where equality documents rather than equality work were paramount. A white female professor noted that in the context of Athena SWAN, it was "certainly my experience of HR, and their engagement with it, because I'm on the committee for Athena SWAN in my department, has been that it's a bit of a box-ticking exercise, thank you very much. What can we say and how can we make it less painful? Almost the quickest way from A to B." A white female academic expressed a similar sentiment, arguing of the focus of her institution:

> It's more about appearance than it is about actually, you know, making sure women get promoted as often as men, about the pay gaps and so on and so forth…[Athena SWAN] is obviously something that looks very good…this awareness of equality, diversity and so on and so forth. So, I think they want to be seen as being aware of all of these issues. Whether they actually do a whole lot about them in practise is a different thing.

Turning to University Beta, while one policy shaper argued that the Athena SWAN application itself demonstrated transparency, it is interesting to note that there was only a very brief mention of equal pay in Beta's most recent application. This section provided the professorial GPG that was calculated for an internal review, which was much narrower than the ECU benchmark for HE. Similar to the single Beta HoD who took proactive corrective action of the GPG in a department, the application explained that Beta had made proactive adjustments, while checking this figure annually for several years. In further parallel with the actions of that HoD, this analysis had not otherwise been publicly known—the only equal pay audit Beta had completed did not include professors—

until this brief mention in an Athena SWAN application. Another policy shaper recalled a discussion of these efforts with the VC, which suggested the active promotion of secrecy:

> [The VC] said that one of the things they noticed a few years ago was that there was a significant disparity between female professorial salaries and male professorial salaries for equivalent work, with equivalent levels of experience. So, [the VC] said that over the course of a few years, they took measures to address that. But this information was not made public and was not publicly reported to, as far as I understand, I don't know whether it was reported to the affected individuals, but it certainly was not made known within the institution. [The VC's] justification was that [the VC] felt that if they were public about this, about the disparity, and about what they were aiming to do to address it, then they would be urged to take action immediately, when budgets were not sufficient to do so. So, they took this action apparently over a couple of years, two or three years, and [the VC] told me the situation is much better now. I have no evidence to attest to that or to the contrary. So, I have no idea. But what I found very surprising about that conversation was that it was advocating for non-transparency about pay equality on the basis of it causing disruption that might prevent the actions being taken. That position doesn't make a great deal of sense to me because I don't see how a discussion about an issue would necessarily prevent, if attempts, if actions were already being taken, I don't see how open discussion about those actions could prevent those actions from being taken.

There may have been a concern by Beta senior management that publicising efforts to remedy the GPG would have been resisted by male professors who felt they would lose out in a zero-sum battle of budgetary constraints. In fact, the Beta HOD who proactively worked to narrow the GPG in their own department noted that even the small post-hoc acknowledgement of those efforts in their departmental Athena SWAN application spurred some of this sentiment. The HoD remarked:

> I did hear one male professor explain to another male professor, who didn't get a raise that he thought he should have got, oh but this year we had to do adjustments on female salaries. He would have got that information from that one sentence in Athena SWAN.

However, the same policy shaper who felt the VC actively promoted secrecy of the professorial GPG, further expressed concern that the motivation underlying Athena SWAN activity was not driven by a genuine desire for culture change and clear reporting of the GPG and equalities data, despite pressure from the union. The shaper observed that:

> When it's presented to senior management, they don't say yes, let's have a review into this. They haven't, certainly haven't resourced it, so no. They're more concerned I think about Athena SWAN, progressing aspects of that, I think more geared toward the charter and accreditation around it.

In a similar vein, a UCU representative expressed scepticism that the process had influenced pay transparency practices, commenting that "The paperwork proceeds on its own momentum. Practices stay at a different level. And connecting the two will take a lot of time because once the

paperwork is done with Athena SWAN, and once it's submitted, it's gone." The representative also explained that the union had felt shut out of the application process, whether by intention or because HR lacked the capacity to engage with them.

Academic viewpoints appeared to be consistent with these sceptical perceptions. A white female academic in a department without Athena SWAN expressed scepticism that the process had led to a more transparent pay environment. Echoing Ahmed's (2007) concerns about the equalities documents standing in for equalities work, she observed that:

> I'm not sure if equality and diversity is something that is really put on the agenda here. I'm not sure if that's coming through clearly from senior management at all. I think fine, they're very happy with the [award], but sometimes, I think getting an award and reaching a goal can almost act as a way of being satisfied…Yay! Well done us.

A white male professor in a department with an Athena SWAN award expressed concern that the primary motivation had been funding access, as he noticed that men on his department's senior management team were quickly replaced with women, including a woman of colour, following a link being made between Athena SWAN and funding. He observed that:

> We just become what is needed, but we don't mean it. There was discussion at one of the board meetings if we knew anyone in [our department] that was a transgender, because if we get a transgender and probably if the transgender is pregnant, we will get so much points, then we will get an Athena Gold.

He was shocked by this assertion, which was made in a meeting of his department's senior management and professors, but he did not say anything. He did not remember anyone else pushing back on the commentary.

A white female academic working on a fixed-term contract in a department with Athena SWAN expressed frustration with the rhetoric of the award, in sharp contrast to her personal experience at work:

> I don't know what it does. I don't know what it is. For me, it's just another one of those really fucking annoying things that I have to do or acknowledge in amongst trying to do some research and running 2.5 modules, and, you know, talking to students…Oh, you get those fucking annoying emails from people, which are like can you make sure you put the Athena SWAN logo on the bottom of your emails? And you're like, no, fuck off! Pay me more money and I might do! You know, it's just so empty. It's just completely empty sentiments. Like, it's just like just do really, really basic things, like pay people the right amount of money for the job they do.

A white female academic further felt that Athena SWAN discussions were particularly steered away from the topic of pay and pay inequality. During a department meeting about Athena SWAN, she

had tried to introduce a discussion of pay, thinking that it was foundational to gender equality, and remembered being sharply silenced:

> The wise men of this institution have been pushing Athena SWAN activities and analyses and submissions not in terms of pay data but in terms of other things, opportunities, talks, maternity policies, parental leave policies, anything else but pay. When I mentioned pay in a school meeting, it was shut down. No, we can't discuss it because it's not our job. It is not within our remit. It is something that is a matter for the centre.

Similarly, another white female academic, who was involved with Beta's institutional Athena SWAN efforts, also felt that it had no impact on the institution's pay transparency environment. When asked whether the subject of pay ever came up within the context of her institutional Athena SWAN work, she replied:

> No, it's really because it's HR policy. I mean, I've tried, also with other things around recruitment and things like that, and all the time it's just no; it's HR policy. You can't change that. So that's not, you know, we can't do that…You don't start things and don't discuss things that don't get you anywhere, right?

A key policy implication of Rubery and Koukiadaki's (2016) international review of the mechanisms to close the GPG was that a nuanced approach is necessary, which must include transformations of the labour market to become more transparent, as well as specific tactics to address gender-based pay equity. Specifically, in regards to voluntary approaches to encourage gender pay equity, they advise to "only promote company prizes for good gender pay policies that are evidence-based and ratified by the workforce" (Rubery and Koukiadaki, 2016, p. 109). This chapter section has suggested that the Athena SWAN charter, at least in its current form, falls short on both accounts. A growing body of literature has begun to question whether it does what it says on the tin (Maddrell *et al.*, 2015; Caffrey *et al.*, 2016; Gregory-Smith, 2017; Rosser *et al.*, 2019). Additionally, there does not appear to be widespread ratification of the process amongst the academics consulted in Universities Alpha or Beta. Respondents had too limited knowledge of the process to comment or expressed strongly negative opinions of its efficacy.

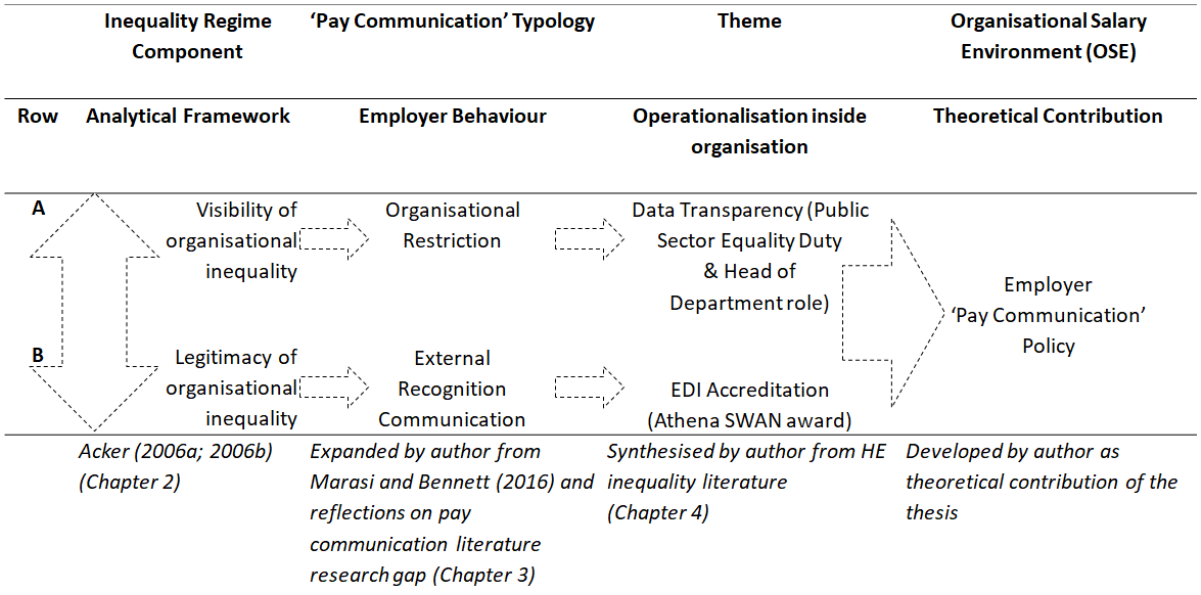
6.7 Summary

This chapter has sought to address the research question: To what effect has the pay 'transparency agenda' been performed in the two university case studies? In a cynical vein, one might say this 'agenda' has been 'performed' to 'minimise' rather than narrow pay inequality by presenting data that obscures more than it reveals. The thematic policy analysis conducted in this chapter illustrated a greater extent of formalised performance of the pay 'transparency agenda' in Alpha than Beta.

This was surprising given that this chapter has demonstrated that both institutions had similarly slightly worse than average overall academic GPGs. Alpha additionally had a worse than average, widening professorial GPG, while Beta's was better than average and narrowing. However, when compared in terms of the regulative and voluntary compliance pressures that have emerged to encourage the performance of the pay 'transparency agenda' to promote workplace equality in UK HE, a remarkably similar picture emerged between the two institutions.

Figure 6-7 summarises the emergent concept that arose during the analysis of the first two themes of this thesis's analytical framework (Rows A and B) to deliver part of the key theoretical contribution of this thesis, namely the functioning of employer 'pay communication' policy as the first component of the OSE. Thematic analysis of the employer 'pay communication' in response to voluntary and regulative pressures revealed a 'pay transparency' paradox. Promised, but limited, transparency to comply with the PSED restricted the visibility of inequality, while engagement with the Athena SWAN charter presented a legitimation of existing arrangements.

Figure 6-7: Operationalising Organisational Salary Environment: Employer 'Pay Communication' Policy



Along Row A, a primary regulative compliance pressure on both institutions to perform greater transparency was the PSED. However, while both institutions published equality and diversity strategy documents that proclaimed their commitment to transparent equality reporting, clear deficiencies in the degree of visibility of inequality were made evident by UCU representatives. In Alpha, the implementation of professorial banding, which could be a tool to narrow pay inequality, led to the visibility created by the equal pay audits becoming instead a tool to legitimate vertical

segregation by gender within the professoriate. Although it was not raised by policy makers or the union, the audits reported an even worse picture for ethnicity, with no BAME staff in the top professorial band. In Beta, despite a similar commitment to publishing equalities data, the actual reporting was so delayed that the UCU committee felt compelled to launch a public campaign. When data was eventually released, it was in a format that made its comparison with previous reports or analysis of trends over time impossible. Indeed, as Acker (2006a, p. 122) remarked "visibility does not necessarily lead to action to remove inequalities: Those with greater power or privilege may be convinced that their power and privilege are richly deserved." This chapter also demonstrated the limitations of radical pay transparency, when afforded only to those with hierarchical privilege, HoDs, and in a format that did not make analysing gender or ethnic-based pay inequality straightforward. The revelation of hidden information about working conditions is not 'self-actuating', especially when the transparency is not constructed in such a way as to make it useful for challenging inequality (Alexander, 2015).

Along Row B, a primary voluntary compliance pressure on both universities to perform greater transparency was the Athena SWAN charter, which provides organisations with significant public kudos. The voluntary award encourages universities to publish analysis of gender-based inequality in their organisations, although very little specifically on pay, and to reflect on the paths to remedy. Financial pressure has strengthened this force, as several key funding strands have begun requiring successful engagement with Athena SWAN to maintain eligibility. Both universities held Athena SWAN awards, which can be seen as a legitimation of existing arrangements. It signals that an organisation opposes gender-based inequality and is taking significant steps towards remedy. However, there was some agreement amongst policy shapers, academics and the union representatives that the legitimacy was superficial, although their views differed as to why.

This chapter concludes with a critique of the 'transparency agenda' for HE pay and progression, rather than a straightforward argument for more transparency. A 'pay transparency' paradox for employer 'pay communication' policy has emerged from analysis in this chapter, which is why employer 'pay communication' policy is the OSE component that is contributed in Figure 6-7. In both institutions, a strong commitment to making inequality visible was presented, but genuine visibility of inequality was low, such as due to data presentation that downplayed the problem of professorial vertical segregation in University Alpha and intermittent and inconsistent data presentation in University Beta. Alongside low visibility of actual inequality, engagement with Athena SWAN in both institutions provided so-called transparency that sent messages of high legitimacy of existing

arrangements to non-expert members of the organisation. In contrast to Acker's (2006b) belief that high visibility and low legitimacy of inequality inside organisations presents the greatest opportunity for reforming inequality regimes, low genuine visibility of inequality and high communicated legitimacy of existing arrangements has presented a hostile environment to change in these two institutions. Similar institutionally self-defensive employer-created 'pay communication' through pay 'transparency agenda' performance was found in both universities. This served to silence inequality complaints that called into question hierarchical power structures, such as the robust professorial banding process that had been established or pay setting processes in the context of Athena SWAN discussions. Whilst transparency was the stated intention of both institutions, an impression of high legitimacy of existing arrangements was emphasised and the actual visibility of inequality was reduced by inconsistent data transparency in practise. Institutionally self-reflexive transparency is needed, but institutionally self-defensive transparency abounded. It is therefore worth exploring the extent to which academic staff discuss pay amongst themselves in these two organisations, which will be presented in Chapter 7.

Chapter 7 Pay Discussion Behaviour Survey Analysis: Situated Activity

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the analysis is located at the level of situated activity and draws on the social activity of social pay comparison by academic staff inside two workplaces. This chapter addresses the second sub-research question: Do academics in the two university case studies violate the 'income-talk' taboo, and if so, how might observed social pay comparison behaviour patterns be explained? This question engages with Acker's (2006a, 2006b) inequality regime component: the visibility of inequality within the higher education (HE) sector, by focusing on social pay comparison. Social comparison of pay and its relationship with the gender pay gap (GPG) has received limited attention by organisational and employment researchers (Burchell and Yagil, 1997). This absence of critical analysis and the persistent taboo against discussing pay (Pearlman, 2013; Fox, 2014) is surprising, considering the growing use of pay transparency as a tool to promote equal pay. To begin to address this literature gap, the OSE as a theoretical analytical framework is developed throughout this thesis. The OSE is composed of employer 'pay communication' policy, as emerged in Chapter 6, as well as social comparison of pay and social norms about discussing pay, which will be explored in this chapter and emerge more fully in Chapter 8. As illustrated in Chapter 6, 'pay communication' policies include policies and protocols that explain pay and progression in a company and formal or informal pay secrecy policies. However, knowledge of individual comparator's pay, such as might be obtained through social pay comparison, is necessary in order to identify potentially illegal pay inequality. While British employees are legally allowed to discuss their pay to reveal individual level inequality, until now there has been little data on whether academics do discuss pay (Gow and Middlemiss, 2012; Mills & Reeve LLP, 2012).

Therefore, the sub-research question of this chapter will be answered by the recording and analysing of previously unknown patterns of pay discussion within the context of the HE sector, using original data collected through a web-based survey of academics in Universities Alpha and Beta. Following a justification for treating the responses from both institutions as a single sample, this chapter will present the results of the survey data analysis. The analysis will first demonstrate the bivariate relationships between social pay comparison behaviour and the factors that have a potential theoretical relationship with it. A binomial logistic regression model using those factors to assess the relative strength of their relationships with reported social comparison behaviour will then be conducted, before using contextual understanding of HE employment conditions to consider how to account for the findings.

7.2 Social Pay Comparison Behaviour Survey: Combined Sample Justification

To record and analyse social pay comparison behaviour, a web-based survey was emailed to academics in Universities Alpha and Beta. This chapter's analysis treats the combined responses from both universities as a single dataset in order to help preserve the institutional anonymity that might be compromised by divulging specific comparisons between the demographics of respondents and the demographics of the surveyed population of the institutions individually. Given the limited extant data on social pay comparison, there was no theoretical reason to expect that social pay comparison behaviour would significantly differ between Universities Alpha and Beta, and so the data was aggregated. Furthermore, three statistical checks using a dummy variable for University Beta membership confirmed that there was no statistically significant difference in the reported social comparison behaviour between the two institutions.

A summary independent two-sample T-test was run to compare responses from the two institutions. This required calculating the mean reported social pay comparison behaviour (the proportion of those who reported that they compare pay), the standard deviation and the number of responses for each institution. These figures were used to run the T-test. The p-value of the independent samples T-test, assuming equal variances, was 0.082, meaning the difference was not statistically significant.[78] Second, a cross-tabulation of the dummy variable for reported social pay comparison behaviour and the dummy variable for University Beta membership confirms this result. The Pearson chi-square value was 2.807 (p-value: 0.094), so again there was no statistically significant difference. Finally, a binomial logistic regression of social pay comparison behaviour confirms the results, even when controlling for several other variables. I added the University Beta dummy variable to the same model that is used in the results section of this chapter. The dummy for University Beta membership results in negligible shifts to the conclusion of the model and adds nothing to it, with a highly insignificant p-value of 0.457.[79]

7.3 Results

For the first time, this survey begins to suggest who, among UK academics, discuss their pay with colleagues. This results section will first describe the bivariate analyses conducted between social pay comparison behaviour and selected independent variables, in order to identify which ones may be most closely related to the propensity to discuss pay. Secondly, a binomial logistic regression

[78] The mean, standard deviation and N of Universities Alpha and Beta are not reported in this thesis to preserve institutional anonymity, which might be compromised by indicating their relative size.
[79] See Appendix J for the full result of the binomial logistic regression model with the University Beta dummy added.

model will be specified to explore the relative strength of these relationships. The aim is to illustrate and explain the social pay comparison behaviour of academics, who work in a sector with a known persistent GPG and G/EPG (Blackaby and Frank, 2000; Blackaby, Booth and Frank, 2005; Bandiera, Rana and Xu, 2016; Mumford and Sechel, 2019; Rollock, 2019) and inside a country with an income-talk taboo social norm (Fox, 2014). Given the intersectional focus of this thesis on gender and ethnicity, it is of interest whether social pay comparison behaviour varies along gender or ethnic lines and how to account for the relationships that are (or are not) demonstrated.

7.3.1 Bivariate Relationships with Social Pay Comparison

The demographic and labour market variables that were used by Burchell and Yagil (1997) have been translated into the present survey, as relevant to the HE employment context, with four additions, as shown in Table 7-1. A total of 14 independent variables were tested in this analysis. I chose not to include a class variable in this survey, due to this study's focus on professional workers.[80] Instead, I included a professorial dummy, in recognition of the different pay structures for professors and academics below the level of professor (Chapter 4). The variable for parental status has been added in recognition of the impact of parenthood on the GPG, the so-called motherhood penalty and daddy bonus (at least for white, professional, married men) (Waldfogel, 1998; Budig and England, 2001; Harkness and Waldfogel, 2003; England, 2005; Hodges and Budig, 2010; Budig and Hodges, 2014; Petersen, Penner and Høgsnes, 2014). The variable for science, engineering and technology (SET) discipline or non-SET discipline has been added in recognition of the horizontal segregation patterns inside academia (Hegewisch *et al.*, 2010; Perales, 2013; Kirton and Greene, 2016; AdvanceHE, 2018). This could have also been of interest, given that Athena SWAN awards were originally only available in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM) disciplines, before being extended to include all disciplines in May 2015 (Equality Challenge Unit, 2015a). The ethnicity variable for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) status has been added in recognition of the key trait intersecting with gender that is used for intersectional analysis in this thesis. Burchell and Yagil's (1997) analysis did not include ethnicity. Lastly, the country cultural identification variable has been added in recognition of the significant, uncritical tendency to ascribe the income-talk taboo to a specific country cultural context, such as Fox's (2014) characterisation of the taboo as 'English.' All respondents were working in the UK at the time of this survey, but given the international workforce of UK academia, some respondents may have grown up outside of the UK. Long-term immigrants to the UK could have become UK citizens by the time of

[80] However, class background could prove a fertile direction for future research on the income-talk taboo and is an increasingly recognised salient factor for many aspects of academic employment.

responding to this survey, which would have obscured their upbringing outside the UK, so respondents were not asked for their citizenship. Instead, they were asked whether they identified most strongly with the culture of the UK or somewhere else. The following section will explore the bivariate relationships between each independent variable and reported social pay comparison behaviour, revealing which relationships were significant. The results for gender, ethnicity and being a professor, which were the key variables used to validate the survey data (Chapter 5), will be discussed in greater detail.

Table 7-1: Independent Variable Translation Summary

Independent Variables (Burchell and Yagil 1997)	Independent Variables (Thesis Survey)
Age Ranges (20-60)	Age (Years)
Highest Education	Highest Education
Social Class	[not present]
[not present]	Job Function
Occupation	Job Title
Membership of a Trade Union	Membership of the UCU
No of Employees in Organisation	[not present]
No of Hours per Week	Full Time/Part Time
Applied for other jobs in past 12 months	Applied for other jobs in past 12 months
Sex	Sex
Intended Vote	Intended Vote
Job Security Perception	Contract Type (Fixed Term/Open Ended)
[not present]	Parental Status
[not present]	SET Discipline/Non-SET Discipline
[not present]	BAME
[not present]	Country Cultural Identification

Similarly to Burchell and Yagil (1997), the next step was to provide a bivariate analysis of each potential independent variable and the propensity to engage in social pay comparison. The question used to measure this propensity was: This research specifically concerns conversations you may have about your pay level relative to the pay level of others. Do you ever talk about pay with your co-workers?[81]

Table 7-2 reveals the percentage of respondents who compared pay, the chi-square values, and the level of significance (if any) for each bivariate relationship with social pay comparison behaviour. More than half (54.7%) of the sample reported engaging in social pay comparison with their co-

[81] This is adapted from the Social Change and Economic Life Initiative question (Gallie, 1991) used in Burchell and Yagil's (1997, p. 740) research on initiating factors of social pay comparison; the original more vaguely worded question read: "Some people compare their pay with the pay made by other individuals or groups of people. Do you ever do this?" My adaptation clarifies my research focus on (gendered and racialized) power dynamics *embedded within the work organisation* (Acker, 2006b).

workers. Only 47.7% of Burchell and Yagil's (1997) sample reported discussing pay. Significant differences in the conduct of the two surveys make it impossible to consider this evidence of a declining income-talk taboo in the UK over time, particularly in view of the fact that the survey in this thesis is occupation-specific. However, it does suggest that despite the conventional wisdom of the income-talk taboo, a considerable number of academics do breach the social convention.

The international makeup of the HE sector was noted in the HE context discussion of this chapter as a possible reason to explore social pay comparison in HE because the income-talk taboo social norm may vary across nations. Of the 372 respondents who answered this question, 55.1% reported identifying most strongly with the culture of a country outside of the UK. However, the variable measuring identification with the UK cultural context, or not, was not significantly related to social pay comparison behaviour. This strengthens the earlier critique that ascribing the income-talk taboo to national culture is insufficient (Chapter 1). At least this does not indicate that the norm is unique to the UK. Future research into whether the income-talk taboo norm and social pay comparison behaviour does in fact vary by country context is needed (Chapter 9).

Seven variables from Table 7-2 were statistically correlated with social pay comparison behaviour. Of these, five variables described individual characteristics. Those who were professors were more likely to discuss pay than those who were not. Professorial pay is not covered by collective bargaining (Chapter 4). Therefore, there is the greatest secrecy surrounding pay and the potential to gain from uncovering hidden knowledge at this level. Those with a doctorate degree were more likely to discuss pay than those with below-doctorate education levels, although this latter group was small (n=38). This could reflect the fact that the traditional academic career trajectory requires a PhD. Therefore, those with a PhD have a greater chance of reaching higher pay, and thus stand to benefit more from knowing the pay of others in preparation for individual pay bargaining, particularly when they reach the professoriate. Those who were University and College (UCU) members were more likely to discuss pay than non-members. Given the purpose of unions is to improve pay and conditions of members, it should be no surprise that UCU members were more likely to discuss pay. However, the UCU's support for pay is mainly through collective bargaining of the national Framework Agreement and subsequent annual pay awards (JNCHES, 2004; University and College Union, 2016b). This would not necessarily encourage individual level pay discussions. Those who had applied for another job in the past 12 months were more likely to discuss pay than those who had not. This is logical, given those who are actively looking for alternative employment are hoping to negotiate a new starting salary soon, and so would be motivated to enquire about

others' pay. Lastly, there was a statistically significant difference in pay discussion behaviour based on voting intention. Those who intended to vote Conservative were the least likely to discuss pay, and those who intended to vote Liberal Democrat or Labour were the most likely. The intention to vote Labour is likely positively correlated with being a UCU member. Likewise, having a doctorate degree is likely positively correlated with being a professor.

Two additional traits refer to structural factors of the job or organisation. Those who were on an open-ended contract were more likely to discuss pay than those who were on a fixed-term contract. This makes sense because those on an open-ended contract may be more embedded in the workplace and have a greater potential opportunity to try to improve their pay because their job is more secure. Finally, those working in SET disciplines were less likely to discuss pay than those working in non-SET disciplines. This is somewhat surprising given the longer history of Athena SWAN 'transparency' in SET disciplines, although it may underline Athena's SWAN's historical neglect of pay analysis as an equality concern. As discussed in Chapter 4, equal pay audits were only added to the application process in the new post-May 2015 rules, and then only for institutional applications (Equality Challenge Unit, 2014, 2015a).

Table 7-2: Social Comparison of Pay by Academics with Reference to Demographic and Labour Market Characteristics

	% Comparing Pay	N	Pearson Chi-Square[a]	P-value
Full Sample	54.7	384		
Age (years, presented in ranges)			3.011	0.556
21-30	41.2	17		
31-40	52.7	148		
41-50	57.8	102		
51-60	60.8	74		
61+	53.1	32		
Highest Education			7.136	0.008***
Doctorate	56.9	346		
Below a Doctorate	34.2	38		
Job Function			3.791	0.150
Teaching and Research	57.8	277		
Teaching Only	46.7	30		
Research Only	46.8	77		
Job Title			12.641	0.000***
Professor	71.3	87		
Below a Professor	49.7	294		
UCU Membership			15.072	0.000***
Member	65.9	170		
Non-Member	46.0	211		
Full Time/Part Time			0.563	0.453
Full Time	55.5	346		
Part Time	48.3	29		
Applied for jobs in past 12 Months			4.992	0.025**
Yes	64.1	103		
No	51.3	279		

**p < 0.1. **p < 0.05. ***p < 0.01*

[a]0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count of less than 5 for all chi-square tests displayed.

	% Comparing Pay	N	Pearson Chi-Square[a]	P-value
Full Sample	54.7	384		
Sex			0.801	0.371
Female	52.1	167		
Male	56.7	217		
Intended Vote[b]			19.624	0.001***
Conservative	25.0	36		
Labour	61.1	149		
Liberal Democrat	61.3	80		
Green	52.0	50		
Other	55.6	27		
Would Not Vote	37.5	24		
Contract Type			3.864	0.049**
Fixed Term	46.8	109		
Open-Ended	57.9	273		
Parental Status			0.462	0.496
Parent	53.2	203		
Non-Parent	56.7	180		
Discipline			4.800	0.028**
SET (Science, Engineering and Technology) Discipline	50.0	218		
Non-SET Discipline	61.4	158		
BAME Status			1.805	0.179
BAME	46.7	60		
White	56.1	321		
Country Cultural ID			1.808	0.179
UK	51.7	205		
Non-UK	58.7	167		

**p < 0.1. **p < 0.05. ***p < 0.01*

[a]0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count of less than 5 for all chi-square tests displayed.

[b]A simplified form of 'Intended Vote' has been used here because some cells had expected counts below 5 with the full range of categories, violating Pearson chi-square requirements.

7.3.1 Sex

Given the intersectional focus of this thesis on gender and ethnicity, it was of interest to check whether there was a gender or ethnicity relationship with social pay comparison behaviour. A greater proportion of men than women reported discussing pay in the sample. However, the chi-square test lacks significance at the 5% confidence level (p-value: 0.371). There was not a statistically significant difference between the reported pay discussion behaviour by men and women. This is similar to Burchell and Yagil's (1997) analysis, where 51.5% of men and 44.1% of women reported comparing pay, but the relationship was again not statistically significant at the 5% confidence level (p-value: 0.065). This is also consistent with Cullen and Perez-Truglia's (2018, p. 6) findings that men and women face similar 'information frictions' (difficulties attaining perfect information about pay in one's workplace) and similar levels of misunderstanding of what others around them earn.

It is important to consider, regarding this finding, that pay discussion behaviour may relate to pay negotiation behaviour; survey respondents appeared to agree. 82.4% of valid respondents (314 individuals)[82] agreed[83] with the statement "Discussing pay with one's colleagues helps one to determine whether one is being paid fairly or not." Nearly two-thirds of respondents would also act on information they learned. 65.1% of valid respondents (248 individuals)[84] agreed[85] with the statement "If I learned someone with a similar job to me was paid more than I am, I would take some action to attempt to remedy the imbalance." Therefore, finding no statistically significant difference between the pay discussion behaviour of men and women is consistent with the findings of a study analysing Australian women's negotiation behaviour, which found that women negotiate at comparable rates to men, but they do not benefit comparably to men from those efforts (Artz, Goodall and Oswald, 2018).

7.3.2 Ethnicity

A smaller proportion of BAME staff than white staff reported discussing pay. However, the chi-square test again lacks significance at the 5% confidence level (p-value: 0.179). Therefore, there was not a statistically significant difference between BAME and white staff's reported pay discussion behaviour. As Burchell and Yagil's (1997) analysis did not include any measure of ethnicity, no comparison can be made with previous findings.

[82] Three respondents did not answer this question.
[83] strongly agree, agree, or somewhat agree
[84] Three respondents did not answer this question.
[85] strongly agree, agree, or somewhat agree

7.3.3 Professoriate

What did emerge prominently, however, was that professorial status was significantly related with pay discussion behaviour. A greater proportion of professors than non-professors reported discussing pay. The chi-square test reveals statistical significance at the 1% confidence level (p-value: 0.000). This is in striking contrast with Burchell and Yagil's (1997) finding that occupation was the strongest predictor of social pay comparison behaviour. They found that managers were least likely to report comparing pay, while nurses, and to a greater extent, teachers, were more likely to do so. They argued that this could be explained by the fact that manager pay was usually individually determined and if they were union members, their union representation was weak and had little to do with their pay. Conversely, nurses, and to a greater extent, teachers, had powerful unions and had also come through several years of high-profile union pay battles prior to the survey.

This sample was confined to one occupation, namely academics working in the UK HE sector. However, job title was used as the closest measure possible to stand in for occupation. UK academics below the professoriate had been through recent significant pay battles prior to this survey, most recently over the 2016/17 pay settlement. Academics are represented by the reasonably strong UCU (2016a). Conversely, professorial pay is very individualised. While professors may be UCU members, they are not covered by the UCU's collectively agreed national pay spine (Grove, 2013c), although Universities Alpha and Beta both voluntarily increased professorial pay in line with the annual pay agreement. In fact, the secretive nature of individualised pay for UK professors, led to the high-profile employment tribunal equal pay decision in the case of Professor Schafer and her employer, Royal Holloway and Bedford New College (University and College Union, 2010; Lewis, 2011). If Burchell and Yagil's (1997) conclusion that pay is discussed least where it is most individualised was applicable to the HE context, one would have expected professors to discuss their pay the least amongst academic staff. This survey indicates precisely the opposite.

7.3.2 Binomial Logistic Regression on Social Pay Comparison

This chapter next specifies a binomial logistic regression model that describes the likelihood of academics to engage in social pay comparison. This model includes all 14 variables that were tested in the previous section using bivariate analysis alone. The model can only run on individuals without missing data on any variables in the model. This excluded 42 of the 384 respondents due to non-response to some questions as respondents could skip any question.

Table 7-3: Names and Definitions of Model Variables

Variable Name	Definition
Age	Scale; age reported in years
Doctorate	Categorical: 1: PhD; 0: anything below PhD,
JobFunction	Categorical: 1: Teaching and Research, 0: Teaching or Research only
Professor	Categorical: 1: professor, 0: below professor
UCUmember	Categorical: 1: union member, 0: non-member
FullTimeEmployment	Categorical: 1: full-time, 0: part time
JobApp12	Categorical: 1: applied for job in past 12 months, 0: not applied for job in past 12 months
Sex	Categorical: 1: male; 0: female
ContractType	Categorical: 1: fixed term; 0: open-ended
Parent	Categorical: 1: parent, 0: not a parent
SETdiscipline	Categorical: 1:SET discipline, 0: non-SET discipline
BAME	Categorical: 1: Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, 0: white
UKID	Categorical: 1: identifies most strongly with UK culture, 0: identifies most strongly with any non-UK culture
VoteIntent	Categorical: (reference: Conservative) 1: Green, 2: Labour, 3: Liberal Democrat, 4: Other, 5: Would Not Vote

Considering recent criticism that stepwise entry, as used in Burchell and Yagil's (1997) model, is vulnerable to influence by randomness in data and so poorly replicable, this model applied the forced entry method. Hierarchical entry is also vulnerable to influence by the researcher's bias. Forced entry removes the influence of randomness and researcher bias on the order that variables enter the model. All variables, which have been selected for inclusion on solid theoretical grounds, are put into the model simultaneously; therefore, Table 7-4 displays a single model (Studenmund and Cassidy, 1987; Field, 2013). The model suggests that only being a professor[86], having a doctorate, being a Liberal Democrat or Labour Supporter and being a UCU member influenced the propensity to discuss pay, when controlling for the other identified demographic variables. These traits all increase the propensity of respondents to report discussing their pay. The relative size of these influences follows in decreasing order. Being a professor was the strongest predictor of reporting pay discussion behaviour, increasing the likelihood by 3.6 times that of non-professors, ceteris paribus. Having a doctorate increased this likelihood by 3.5 times, being a Liberal Democrat supporter by 3.4 times, being a Labour supporter by 3.3 times, and being a UCU member by 2.1

[86] It may be useful to further to explore quantitative trends in the data regarding with whom these academics reported discussing their pay. Questions were included into the survey to capture this information, with respect to sex, ethnicity, age, job category, and UCU membership. However, too many respondents skipped these questions or gave a neutral response to make this data meaningful, so it has not been reported.

times. None of the other variables added anything to the model. Overall, the model explains about 16-22% of the likelihood of reporting social pay comparison.[87]

Table 7-4: Binomial Logistic Regression for Reported Pay Discussion Behaviour

	No Model	Model 1
Constant	1.235 (0.109)	0.186 (1.170)
Age		0.986 (0.017)
Doctorate		3.438 (0.475)***
JobFunction		0.873 (0.310)
Professor		3.569 (0.389)***
UCUmember		2.147 (0.265)***
FullTimeEmployment		1.311 (0.508)
JobApp12		1.383 (0.290)
Sex		1.254 (0.253)
ContractType		1.016 (0.334)
Parent		0.788 (0.261)
SETdiscipline		0.682 (0.266)
BAME		0.919 (0.343)
UKID		0.790 (0.252)
VoteIntent (Reference: Conservative)		
Green		2.154 (0.556)
Labour		3.324 (0.466)**
Liberal Democrat		3.383 (0.499)**
Other		2.523 (0.666)
Would Not Vote		1.005 (0.635)
Pseudo R^2 (Cox & Snell R^2)		0.162
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke R)		0.217
Percentage correctly predicted	55.3	65.2
N	342	342

Note: This table reports the odds ratios (standard errors in parentheses).
**p< 0.1. **p < 0.05. ***p < 0.01*

7.4 Summary

This chapter has provided and analysed primary data related to the social pay comparison component of the OSE inside the two case study universities. Social pay comparison violates the income-talk taboo (Fox, 2014). This original survey revisited Burchell and Yagil's (1997) early attempts to identify demographic and labour market factors associated with the propensity to engage in social pay comparison. While their study was conducted on data from a random sample of the workforce of an English locality, this web-based survey was distributed by email to the entire accessible population of academics at two case study universities in late 2016, in a similar manner to other organisational surveys (Simsek and Veiga, 2001), such as staff surveys commonly conducted by UK universities.

[87] The Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients confirms the model is significant at the 0.1% confidence level.

This survey has contributed original empirical illustration of the hidden pay discussion behaviour of UK academics. More than half of respondents (54.7%) reported discussing their pay with colleagues. However, there was statistically significant variation in this behaviour. 14 independent variables were collected by this survey, in order to translate Burchell and Yagil's (1997) analysis into the UK HE employment context. This chapter first tested for bivariate relationships between each of these variables and social pay comparison behaviour. Half of these characteristics were significantly related with discussing pay, including: having a PhD, being a professor, being a UCU member, having applied for jobs in the past 12 months, vote intention, being on an open-ended contract, and working in a non-SET discipline. These factors were all positively correlated with discussing pay, except for voting intention.[88]

Analysis was deepened by specification of a binomial logistic regression of social pay comparison behaviour with a model comprised of these same 14 independent variables. This model revealed that only being a professor, having a doctorate, being a UCU member, and specifically being a Liberal Democrat or Labour voter (relative to being a Conservative voter) remained significantly and positively correlated with discussing pay. No other variables achieved a significant contribution to the model. Hierarchical status was the most important factor in predicting pay discussion behaviour, with professors 3.6 times more likely to discuss their pay than their junior colleagues, ceteris paribus.

The organisational survey style design of the distribution means that these results are not statistically generalizable to the UK HE sector or the UK workforce. They reflect the behaviour of academics at two universities. Nevertheless, these results support earlier critiques of the often uncritical presentation of the income-talk taboo in academic literature (Chapter 3). Conversely, some variation in compliance with the income-talk taboo could be expected. As anthropologist argue, social taboos do not have agency; individuals living under them have the 'freedom to do otherwise' (Fischer and Ravizza, 1993, p. 6). Nevertheless, Fox's (2014, p. 290) critical anthropological admonishment cautioned that "it is important to understand why people do these things."

This survey has demonstrated that, despite the so-called income-talk taboo, academics are more likely than not to discuss pay with each other at some stage. This is interestingly the case, even

[88] As reported in Table 7-3, voting intention was a categorical variable and not a dichotomous dummy variable. As such, this result required further investigation to explain the relationship, which was done through the treatment of this variable as categorical in the binomial logistic regression.

though 85.6% of those same respondents agreed with the statement 'British people have a strong aversion to talking about their salary and related matters.' What these results most strikingly illustrate through the binomial logistic regression model is a stark difference between the pay discussion behaviour of junior and senior academics. The most influential factor explaining the propensity to discuss pay was having reached the professoriate, a point at which, generally speaking, an academic would feel the most secure in their academic career. It could be that a professor can risk having conversations about pay that violate the income-talk taboo. This tendency to discuss pay when the risk of doing so is perceived as lower due to having achieved greater career establishment is also consistent with the finding that those with PhDs were more likely to discuss their pay than those without PhDs, as well as the finding that UCU members (who have access to union support) were more likely to discuss their pay than non-UCU members. Professors are also those who are likely to benefit the most by discussing pay. Professorial pay is above the academic pay scale and, therefore, their pay is higher and more individualised than pay for other academics. A professor is more likely to learn information that suggests that they should have a higher salary than a lecturer would be, as the range of pay for professors is also wider than for other academics (Chapter 6).

The most parsimonious explanation of this result, however, is structural and perhaps linked to an understanding that pay—as well as pay inequality—results from power imbalances between institutional employment relations actors, including government, trades unions, and employers. Trades unions are often important players in efforts to narrow the GPG, as Conley et al. (2019) explored in the UK, Italian, and Polish contexts. Acker's (1989) analysis of the comparable worth efforts in the US state of Oregon demonstrated this potential role of trade unions in the context of concerning horizontal occupational segregation. Considering this union perspective, non-professors in this survey are covered by sectoral collective bargaining that is linked to the national Framework Agreement (JNCHES, 2004); the UCU negotiates for a pay uplift every year on their behalf (University and College Union, 2016a). Professorial pay is not covered by these sectoral collective negotiations, and the veil of secrecy over professorial pay has been subject to judicial criticism for putting institutions at risk of equal pay claims (Lewis, 2011). Therefore, this professorial pay discussion proclivity may simply be behaviour of last resort. Professors are more likely to have pay conversations with colleagues because there is no transparency for their pay. Hence, without recourse to a pay scale, there is no other way for professors to learn what their colleagues earn, and in turn, what they should earn. A key distinction, however, is that University Alpha had established institutional professorial pay banding prior to 2016/17, and University Beta had not. Nevertheless,

professorial pay discussion behaviour was not statistically different between the two institutions,[89] calling into question the degree of transparency of the institutionally managed professorial banding procedures at Alpha. Union and remuneration shaper voices sharply disagreed on this question (Chapter 8).

Lastly, it was somewhat surprising from the gender and ethnicity-based intersectional focus of this thesis that pay discussion behaviour was not statistically different between men and women, or BAME and white academics. These early findings could be further tested in a more generalisable survey with a randomised sample of all UK academics, or a representative sample of the UK labour force. However, an increasing likelihood to discuss pay as one becomes more secure in one's job could help to explain some of the persistent inequality in pay due to the vertical segregation that is faced by women academics, particularly BAME women, if talking about pay (and related progression) with colleagues helps academics to advance their careers. The survey data cannot elaborate on this conjecture.

Qualitative analysis of social pay comparison (or lack thereof) and the links between employment structures and pay secrecy should be further explored, with consideration for Marasi and Bennett's (2016) call to consider how pay information is communicated and Fox's (2014) entreaty to understand the 'why' behind taboo compliance/non-compliance. The nature of employee social pay comparison should be critically interrogated. We know from this chapter that academics in these case study institutions were more likely than not to report discussing pay, at least in some contexts, and this was particularly true for professors. To complete a more nuanced picture of the OSE in Universities Alpha and Beta, the findings of this survey will be supplemented by semi-structured interviews with a sampling of remuneration policy shapers, union representative and academics across the disciplines from the two case study universities in Chapter 8.

[89] In University Alpha, 67.9% of professorial respondents discussed their pay, while 72.9% of University Beta professors did. However, a cross-tabulation of the dichotomous variable for reported social pay comparison behaviour or not and the dummy variable for University Beta membership with the sample cut to professors only confirmed that these figures are not statistically different. The Pearson chi-square value was 0.234 (p-value: 0.629).

Chapter 8 The Income-Talk Taboo, Employee Social Pay Comparison Interactions, and Perspectives on Informal Pay Secrecy Norms and Bureaucratic Reward Processes: The Self

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the analysis is located at the level of the self and draws on the micro level experience of workplace social pay comparison and other social interactions that relate to pay and self-identity. Analysing situated activity and self level experiences within two research-intensive universities in the South East of England is consistent with the adoption of Layder's (1993, 2013) social domain and adaptive theories in this thesis (Chapter 5). This qualitative thematic analysis primarily draws on semi-structured interviews with academics from the level of lecturer to professor. Supplemental critical context is provided by analysing semi-structured interviews with UCU representatives and policy shapers, and relevant public pay and progression-related documents that were available from the two institutions during the 2016/17 academic year. Whilst Chapter 6 sought to illuminate the shape of the pay 'transparency agenda' implementation in the two case study universities, this chapter seeks to deepen an understanding of how that implementation may contrast with stated equality goals and interacts with social pay comparison behaviour. Therefore, this analysis will address the final sub-research question: How does the pay 'transparency agenda' within UK universities influence awareness of pay (and related progression) inequality by academics, particularly women and BAME academics?

The focus of Chapter 6 was on the employer's 'pay communication' policy activity—the explicit role of university management in shaping the organisational salary environment (OSE) through the publication of equalities data and seeking public recognition of equalities reforms, which emerged through the analysis of the first two OSE themes. This chapter completes the OSE analysis, using the third and fourth themes. Analysis along the first of these two themes, informal pay secrecy norms, will yield a second emergent component of the OSE, the income-talk taboo, by investigating the informal ways in which university management shapes and benefits from this societal force. The second of these themes to be addressed in this chapter, bureaucratic reward process and policy, will yield the final emergent component of the OSE, employee social pay comparison behaviour and other social interactions, to explore how this behaviour helps to reveal the contradictory impact of bureaucratic processes and policies that have been presented as tools of transparency and equality at work. This explores the emergent phenomenon from Chapter 7, that academics do discuss pay with each other to a higher degree than what one might expect, given the so-called income-talk taboo (Fox, 2014), from a qualitative perspective.

8.2 Informal Pay Secrecy Norms: Management's Control over Employee Compliance with Inequalities (OSE Theme Three)

Turning to the first area of thematic analysis for this chapter, the maintenance of informal pay secrecy norms at Universities Alpha and Beta will be analysed through the lens of Acker's (2006b, 2006a) inequality regime component: management's control over employee compliance with inequalities. Acker (2006b, p. 454) wrote that "organisational controls are, in the first instance, class controls, directed at maintaining the power of managers, ensuring that employees act to further the organisation's goals, and getting workers to accept the system of inequality." The exercise of management control is enabled by hierarchical organisational, gendered and racialized power structures and these embedded structures hinder inequality regime change (Acker, 2006b).

Managerial control may be direct, indirect, or internal. Direct management control can take the form of bureaucratic policies to be obeyed, reward, coercion, or even verbal or physical violence (Perrow, 1991; Hearn and Parkin, 2001; Acker, 2006b). A direct form of management control relevant to this thesis would be the bureaucratic policy of pay secrecy clauses (PSCs) in employment contracts. These 'gagging clauses' may prohibit employees from discussing their own pay with anyone, including their work colleagues, and they are typically found in private sector firms (Gow and Middlemiss, 2012). Nevertheless, the Equality Act 2010 protects the right of employees to discuss pay amongst each other if they suspect illegal discrimination (Doherty, 2011). Given the law, the tendency of PSCs to be found in the private sector, and the strong tradition of academic freedom inside universities, it would be surprising if academics working in public universities in the UK were subject to direct managerial control through PSCs. This is especially so given the efforts by the case study universities in this thesis to perform the pay 'transparency agenda (Chapter 6). As anticipated, no policy shaper, union committee member or academic interviewee in either case study institution provided compelling evidence of the use of such clauses within their organisation, and nearly all provided resounding assurance that, to the best of their collective knowledge, no academic in their organisation was prohibited from disclosing their pay by a PSC.

Consequently, in the HE context, it is more useful to consider forms of indirect and internalised managerial control. These forms of control serve to reinforce the social norm-sewn cloak of secrecy over pay in practise, in contrast with the theoretical performance of the pay 'transparency agenda.' The social anthropologist Fox (2014, p. 291) referred to the so-called 'income-talk taboo' as the strongest taboo within the broader money-talk taboo. Yet, she advocated for critical assessment of this taboo, rather than just accepting it as an established cultural value, noting that "it is important to understand why people do these things. But it doesn't make them any less daft" (Fox, 2014, p.

290). The following sub-sections will bring to light the societal income-talk taboo component of the OSE by exploring the indirect and internalised forms of managerial control over this societal force. An example of disturbing internalised managerial control is 'the helpfulness trap', which creates an unspoken barrier to progression and will be examined from the perspective of women and BAME academics. Echoing conclusions drawn in Chapter 6, despite a greater degree of formal transparency policy in University Alpha than Beta, indirect and internalised managerial controls in both universities will be shown to reinforce the income-talk taboo.

8.2.1 Indirect Managerial Control and the Pay Secrecy Norm

Indirect managerial control may take the form of tracking or monitoring work, hindering access to information, or recruiting employees from relatively powerless demographics (Acker and Van Houten, 1974; Acker, 2006b). Examples of indirect control were already evident in the analysis of Chapter 6, such as the difficulties that were faced by UCU representatives of both universities in accessing consistent and comprehensive staff diversity data and the concerted effort by Beta senior management to conceal on-going efforts to narrow the professorial GPG until the exercise was completed. When data is eventually released after great delay or not at all, it ceases to be a useful tool to examine inequality, as institutions can assert that things have improved since the data was collected. Where a GPG remedy is conducted under the cloak of silence, with minimal acknowledgement on completion, the information restriction reinforces the norm that pay problems are not to be discussed.

Informal cues from the centre, arising from HR processes or communication, and head of department (HoD) behaviour may also indirectly discourage open discussion about pay. Alpha and Beta policy shapers generally pointed to formal institutional policies of establishing pay and progression as evidence that pay was fairly determined and open for discussion, pursuant to data protection law. However, one Beta policy shaper was sceptical in this regard, observing:

> We have a pay structure, but we don't have a pay policy. So, we don't say this is where we expected to pay people. These are the reasons why. There are our grade differentials between lowest grade staff and high-grade staff. This is the difference. If you have a pay policy, then you can say things like: what's the lowest pay? What's the median pay? Differences between the lowest pay staff and the highest pay staff, which is the [VC]. What does that look like? They're not transparent about things like that…I don't think the appetite is there.

Related to this point, although policy shapers in both institutions talked about academic pay and the pay scale as though it was clear that lecturers, senior lecturers and readers were each in turn paid within certain ranges, neither institution had published documentation on their websites detailing

such ranges. Within this context, a Beta policy shaper acknowledged that the societal discomfort with discussing pay (not specific to Beta or HE), is likely to be exacerbated for some managers in the university by the practical deviations from the published pay structure. Some managers may be particularly uncomfortable with discussing pay because they know that academic pay does sometimes diverge from the published pay scale. These divergences can come in the form of market supplements, for example. Describing the justification for using market supplements for academics, even for lecturers, the policy shaper remarked:

> We definitely have areas where, because of the nature of the work, they don't sit nicely into our pay structures. We would never get anyone employed. For example, in economics we would never employ people if we paid them on the normal lecturer salary. So, we have to look at more creative ways to be able to address those things. Areas of marketing as well, we can't usually get people to do those kinds of jobs.

Given these intersecting forces, the shaper said that they would not be surprised if an academic was met with shock by their HoD or an HR professional, if she queried why her pay was lower than the pay of a similarly situated man. The shaper added that "It also depends on what school they were working in because like I said there are, I'm aware of grade drift in certain schools." Further blurring stems from the placement of senior lecturers and readers within the same institutional pay scale band in both universities, which will be further explored in the second theme of this chapter.

Compounding this nebulosity, UCU representatives in both institutions expressed concern that HoDs—the frontline of university management from the perspective of academics—and HR professionals tended to discourage academic pay discussions and efforts to better understand progression policy. One Alpha representative explained:

> Heads of department are woefully ignorant, as are even more senior management, on HR rules and procedure. They're woefully ignorant on the law…There are appropriate ways to deal with an issue like [staff querying pay differentials]. One of them is not to say to the individual you shouldn't be talking about your pay…In the Equality Act in particular, if any of this has been post 2010, it's illegal. It's never clear that these people know. They just don't have the experience, judgement or training on a lot of issues to know, perhaps, that they're doing things wrong, and they learn by example from other people who also don't have the judgement, training and experience.

A similarly pessimistic message was presented by a Beta UCU representative, who observed:

> There is no real avenue to go and speak about pay disparity often because it's confidential and it's very hard to also produce some sort of documentary evidence to say somebody's being paid higher. That will not be available to you. HR often normally don't give you advice on those kinds of things. It will be a very difficult conversation to have with your head of school.

Beta and Alpha academics appeared to be vulnerable to chance in terms of the reaction to sensitive pay discussions by HoDs and HR professionals. HoDs could play champion or silencer in conversations about pay. For example, one white female professor recounted being told twice by her head that she should not be talking about her pay with anyone. The first time was in the context of querying why her comparable male colleague was paid more than she was, even though he had finished his PhD several years more recently and had a weaker publication record. She recalled:

> I found out that he was on three or four thousand pounds more than I was…I was saying 'oh my God, it's really hard to live.' And he was like 'well, you know, because I'd been at [former university] a couple years, I got this, you know, my salary scale is higher, so I am comfortable on this'…So, I went to [my HoD] and said 'Oh, this is weird. Can we talk about this?' And he went 'Oh, you really shouldn't be talking about this. You shouldn't be talking about this', and I was like 'Oh, ok.'

The second instance that she recalled illustrated her HoD's continued efforts to silence discussion of her pay, while also revealing how little the HoD appeared to know about what she earned. She was seeking her HoD's signature on a form to document her earnings to a prospective landlord. She explained:

> We had a room of visiting academics and a very senior visiting academic from America was talking to [the HoD] and I was like 'Oh, [HoD], I need this form signed.' And he was like 'Oh my goodness, you don't earn enough to rent this house by yourself!' And I'm like 'Yeah, no, I don't.' And he was like 'that's awful.'…The senior academic from America was just like, 'What do you mean she doesn't earn anything?' And [my HoD] was like 'Don't talk to, don't tell anyone how much you earn,' to me…Then, when I was about to say how much less than [the required income to rent alone] I earned because this senior academic had asked me, my HoD was like '*Gasp* You shouldn't say this!'

The HoD's discomfort with discussing pay and clear desire to suppress conversation could stem from a lack of power to resolve the matter, or a lack of willingness to try. As discussed in Chapter 6, payroll came out of a centralised budget in University Alpha, so it was not under direct HoD control. Consistent with this understanding, when asked whether she felt she received messages from university authority figures, like her HoD, about discussing pay, another white female academic acknowledged "Well, the thing is, I'm not really sure who deals with pay. I mean, like, it's certainly not [the HoD]. I mean, maybe to some extent." However, she did recall that her HoD had sent her the pay offer when she was being recruited to Alpha, which she simply accepted.

By contrast, some Alpha HoDs were more engaged, championing, and open (at least in the context of one-to-one conversations) regarding the pay of their subordinates. Another white female professor recalled having been encouraged to negotiate her pay harder, when her original inclination had been only to ask for her current salary plus a small increase to cover her new

commute. She was making an important leap from holding a post-doc elsewhere to her first permanent academic job, a lectureship at Alpha. She recalled:

> [My HoD] offered me in the end, the top of the [lecturer grade] in reflection of my experience and all the rest and to make sure that they'd matched and then gone a bit further than my salary. He made this quip, 'you know, you need an agent'…I think he was basically insinuating don't be afraid to ask for more. So, you know, I think that's interesting because I can't imagine that's an across the board experience for people in academia.

While that now-professor experienced strong support on her pay, such openness did not appear to be the norm at Alpha or Beta. A BAME male professor observed of senior management in Beta:

> I think it's, to the senior people in the university, I think it's convenient to try and keep things unspoken and as lacking in transparency as possible because it is a difficult and awkward topic and subject to have to kind of deal with and it can open a can of worms about what is and isn't a fair pay system.

A Beta BAME female professor echoed this perception, arguing that a social taboo around discussing pay in the UK serves the interests of employers in order to minimise salary costs, which could be more difficult to maintain in the light of radical pay transparency between individuals. She noted:

> I don't think people talk very much about pay, but that only helps sustain the disadvantages that are already present in the system. It serves the interest of the employers rather than the employees, so I think it's really important that people are open about their pay. I think all pay should be public anyway. Everybody's pay should be publicly accessible in an ideal world, in my world.

The framing by HoDs of payroll as an institutional cost to be minimised, contributed in a more subtle manner to the reinforcement of the pay secrecy norm. The language suggested that to question one's own pay, would be a greedy act. For example, a white male academic working within the humanities and social sciences observed that the only open discussion of pay he could recall ever taking place within his department, was in a department meeting where pay was framed as an institutional burden. He recalled the discussion, which he considered to be ridiculous:

> Our previous [HoD] presented the breakdown of the [department] budget, which was the first and last time that's been done, incidentally, which is interesting, and said 'Well, I want you to realise that 50%, 57% of our expenditure goes on staff costs.' And the implication was that we should feel lucky because so much money was being lavished on us, right? And I thought, but where else is it going to go? We don't have a Large Hadron Collider or something…I thought it was a stupid thing to say. What point are you trying to make? Of course, it's staff costs. We've got no other costs. You know, photocopying and space, you know, you have to rent space from the university, but beyond that, we haven't got equipment or anything…So, that was a very headline figure, but beyond that, I've never heard pay discussed sort of openly.

A Beta BAME female professor further agreed that existing structures and behaviours by management serve to keep matters of pay both hidden and individualised. Although pay is related to an institutional pay scale, when problems with that implementation arise, those problems are not addressed in a collectivised manner. Pressure to keep pay discussion individualised also makes identifying the pay of potentially relevant comparators, which are needed for possible equal pay claims, challenging (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2011a). The professor argued:

> It would help to change things much more quickly if there was more of a mass demonstration against pay inequalities, rather than people having to negotiate things individually…When people have to individually stick their necks out, there are individual repercussions to how they are viewed and I think that's really unfair for institutional issues…At the moment, if you're dealing with 'I think I'm being paid less than I should be,' you know, on what basis can you argue that you know? You've got no information.

Therefore, although there was some variation in behaviour, a considerable degree of indirect managerial control could be seen to be exerted by HoDs in such a way as to reinforce the pay secrecy norm. This control was exerted through conversations where HoDs discouraged academics from discussing pay openly. This behaviour may be driven by HoDs' awareness that actual pay does diverge some from stated pay structures, their own lack of power to resolve pay inequality, or their own lack of willingness to try to resolve pay inequality, which may itself be driven by HoDs' own awareness of the income-talk taboo.

8.2.2 Internalised Managerial Control and the Pay Secrecy Norm

Acker (2006b) also acknowledged that internalised managerial control takes the most invisible form. These controls can look like adopted trust in bureaucratic systems, such as the professorial pay banding process in Alpha, or the pay scale and academic promotions procedures in both universities. An Alpha BAME female and white male professor both agreed that they would not be surprised if university management expressed shock if a woman came to them and explained that she had discussed pay with a similarly situated man and learned that he was being paid more. This demonstrates the trust in bureaucratic systems that was perceived to be expected by management and their trust in pay secrecy norms as an organising process. The same BAME women professor remarked:

> I think that what these institutions do is they make everything public, and they make the argument that, they make the point that, you know, if you're an SL, you're between [£X] and whatever on the spine and that's where you come in and everyone, it doesn't matter, you're paid equally to the person who is on the same pay spine as you, regardless of whether you're male, female, older, or younger. That's their protection, so they'd be like 'What? That's not possible!'

Relatedly, the same white male professor added that "I think senior management, although they claim to be following due process, in practise, do not do so, not necessarily just in relation to pay but in relation to employment practices more generally." To further illustrate the pressure from senior management to implicitly trust bureaucratic systems, the white male professor went on to remark that although he served on an institutional promotion committee, the committee had no knowledge of—nor power over—pay rises awarded for the promotions they approved. He said of pay rises for promotions that "it's not seen as something that academics should have any right to know about. It's down to HR and their relationship with the individual academic." Individualising pay decisions can be seen as part of the tendency of universities to individualise problems, rather than acknowledge problems with the established systems. This sort of blind trust in the bureaucratic system encouraged by senior management is an internalised control mechanism over the pay secrecy norm and will be illustrated in the pay rises associated with promotion that will be discussed in the second theme of this chapter. Yet, there is an ambiguous nature to promotion pay rises, as the promotion policy documents in both universities do not explain how pay rises should work at promotion. They are silent on the matter of how such pay rises are calculated.

For white women in both institutions, promotion was presented by management as a resolution to the acknowledged unfairness that the women were experiencing. This unquestioning trust in bureaucratic systems was made apparent by Alpha and Beta academics. These academics appeared to have internalised the social taboo against discussing pay to the extent that even the idea that they might be underpaid due to their sex was not something they could readily imagine. In Alpha, a white female professor felt that this British cultural aversion was organic, although also convenient for management. She remarked:

> So, money is a bit sordid, and I do think that's a kind of self-policing thing. I do think it's a cultural thing to do with British or English notions of not discussing salary, and I think that it doesn't need to be policed in any way by the centre, but it benefits them…because people don't realise that they could be earning more. They don't think in those terms.

A Beta white female professor could easily have been describing her Alpha counterpart. The Beta professor said that she would be unhappy with radical pay transparency, where everyone's pay was publicly available online, as is practised in some North American public universities (Monopoli, 2016) and in some Scandinavian countries through a tax return database (Fernandez, 2010; Swift, 2012; Kulow, 2013; Marcal, 2017). Interestingly, she expressed this even though she suspected there was a large disparity in institutional financial investment between the humanities, where she worked, and

the sciences. Although she felt this was unfair, particularly given her department's strong rankings, she explicitly did not characterise the disparity as gendered.

Valuing pleasure from work also functions as an internalised control against discussing pay. This control is related to the common understanding amongst the academics interviewed that academia is a calling, something beyond 'minor' concerns like pay. Several Alpha academics expressed this view, including a BAME male academic who observed:

> I think in the university sector, I think it's sort of an underlying, unspoken sort of rule that, you know, money is not the thing that drives you in the university. You know, there are other things that drive you: the teaching, the research…There's a sort of unspoken rule in universities, you know, that you're not going to make money here. If you want to make money, you go to the business world.

Similarly, a white female professor agreed that there is "a mentality in academia that like, you know, the job and the quality of experience kind of takes priority over everything, including money." She went on to posit that there is an unspoken expectation that "of course, you would go and take the amazing research experience and research community over things like financial security, or even, for that matter, job security, you know, in terms of permanence of contract." A similar view was expressed by a white female Beta academic who explained:

> There is definitely an odd situation where there is a perception of shock if individuals within higher education institutions treat the higher education institution as an employer, rather than as a, I don't know, some form of church, abbey, or monastery…I think part of that may be because the duty of care between the university and its participants has been, I think the duty or that kind of contract have broken quite comprehensively now…I get the impression that it may have once been the case that university institutions cared for their academics, cared for their staff, in a somewhat feudal or patriarchal way. My sense now is that because we're talking about institutions that now operate according to the principles, I guess they are neo-liberal principles of, it's a form of business model, and so those cultures of care have been eroded. But there is not an equivalent employee-employer culture that has properly embedded itself. The policies are there because they have to be. The law is there because it has to be. But I don't get the impression that the culture has made that shift yet.

The strength of the perception that academia is beyond pay that came through from the academics, contrasts sharply with existing policies at Universities Beta and Alpha on retention and market supplement payments. These reward policies are designed to create an objective justification for paying someone more than what they would receive on the standard pay scale on the basis that the standard pay would be insufficient to recruit or keep a desired candidate (Doucet, Durand and Smith, 2008). It therefore follows that some academics must be (perhaps quietly) driven by 'minor concerns' like pay. Otherwise, employers would not have so forcefully demanded the allowance to

keep these policies during the course of negotiating the Framework Agreement of 2004 (JNCHES, 2004; NATFHE, 2005).

A final internalised control is fear, such as the fear of being seen as what Healy, Bradley, and Forson (2011, p. 482) called a 'troublemaker.' In a similar vein, Ahmed's (2018a, 2018b) ongoing research about 'complaint as diversity work' in UK higher education (HE) illustrates how formally reporting problems that are experienced in universities should be an important tool to record and combat those problems. However, instead, those complaints are often used as evidence of what is wrong with the complainer, rather than the workplace. It is within this context that an Alpha UCU representative expressed concern that:

> Most people are just terrified to speak up, even in an anonymised form. People are very, very afraid. Very afraid. If you've been treated badly, the last thing you want to do is make a fuss and have your head of department do even more, you know? Because you know that senior management wouldn't listen to you. They'll listen to your head of department.

The fear of being seen as a troublemaker is amplified within the context of a highly competitive job market. A Beta white male academic observed that "I think it's quite hard to mobilise people around pay, actually, because there's this view that, well, we're kind of lucky to have a job at all. Well, other people have it much harder. Well, we'll look greedy." A BAME female professor at Beta felt that a white female professor had been reluctant to speak with her, due to an apparent fear of this zero-sum resource competition. The two academics had applied for a readership at the same time, but only the white woman was initially successful. A colleague advised the BAME woman to seek advice from the newly promoted white woman for the next time. She did, but the white woman never replied to her email. The white woman went on to become a professor a year before the BAME woman did. When the BAME woman learned she was being promoted to professor the next year, she again sought the white woman's advice, this time because she was considering trying to negotiate a higher pay rise on becoming a professor. The BAME woman felt the initial offer being made was low. Although the BAME woman explained that she had a much better relationship with the white woman by this time, again she received no reply. The BAME professor felt that the white woman (wrongly) worried that helping someone else would reduce her own resources, observing:

> The funny thing is when I made a case for higher pay, the head of school said [they] looked at the kind of pay of everybody in the school, the lowest paid, the three lowest paid people were women so [they] decided to lift the pay of somebody else as well, which is that person, who never replied to my emails…So, I think we also internalise this kind of pay secrecy to a large extent and we think that we are competing with each other, I think. So, beyond pay secrecy, I think it has something to do with the capitalist system and capitalist work relations as well, I think. That people are always kind of positioned as competitors.

There is also a related internalised fear of causing resentment by revealing pay information. For example, a white female Beta professor felt that radical pay transparency would be a bad idea because it would create feelings of resentment in the university. She felt that "it would make lots of people cross." She pointed to the backlash against the BBC's transparency of high pay as evidence of the importance of maintaining individual level pay secrecy. The BBC pay story had broken shortly before the interview, and it had revealed significant gender disparity amongst the highest paid BBC talent (BBC News, 2018). The professor reflected:

> I'm a great believer in privacy…I mean, you know when there was all that brouhaha about what people were being paid at the BBC. I mean, they are paid at crazy salaries, but it produced very unpleasant results. You know, people were being attacked personally for the sums of money they earned. I thought that was pretty unpleasant.

This concern reflects an embedded acceptance of the power privilege that is enjoyed by employers over workers. If pay differentials between workers are unjustified, which when exposed, would yield these feelings, the veil of secrecy over pay is merely preventing those feelings. The creation of radical transparency would not be the root cause of the resentment. The root cause would be the employer's unjustified pay decisions, which themselves do not always appear to be the result of a rational strategy but a series of ad-hoc individual decisions.

8.2.3 'The Helpfulness Trap' inside 'Kafkaesque' Bureaucracy: Unspoken Career Barriers Faced by Women and BAME Academics

A disturbing example of internalised managerial control, drawing on the fear of being seen as a troublemaker, is the unspoken pressure that women, BAME academics, and BAME women feel to undertake supportive work that is not strongly rewarded through promotion. This 'helpfulness trap' emerged in the data and can be understood as an unspoken pressure on women and BAME academics to say 'yes', to go above and beyond for their department, particularly regarding pastoral, administrative, and diversity work, even though that work was less rewarded or unrewarded in the academic promotion process. The general concept of this 'helpfulness trap' was elucidated by Padilla (1994), in regards to the experience of ethnic minority academics in the US HE sector. Padilla (1994, p. 26) coined the term 'cultural taxation' to describe "the obligation to show good citizenship toward the institution by serving its needs for ethnic representation on committees, or to demonstrate knowledge and commitment to a cultural group, which may even bring accolades to the institution but which is not usually rewarded by the institution on whose behalf the service was performed." The concept continues to come up in literature about ethnic minorities working in HE (Turner, 2002; Joseph and Hirshfield, 2011) and has been broadened to encompass other marginalised groups that are similarly impacted, such as women, under the term

'identity taxation' (Hirshfield and Joseph, 2012). This is related to the discussion of the significant labour involved in the Athena SWAN process (Chapter 6), as well as the significant criticism that the award tends to disproportionately place this burden on women (Rosser *et al.*, 2019).

This 'helpfulness trap' can be seen as a double bind when examining university processes through Clegg et al.'s (2016) lens of 'Kafkaesque' bureaucracy. They identified three processes that contribute to the feelings of entrapment by a vicious cycle inside the 'Kafkaesque' bureaucracies: meaninglessness, inaction, and helplessness. Socially constructed meaninglessness refers to the feeling that an organisational process is intentionally constructed and actively implemented in a complex manner that is difficult to comprehend. Managed inaction refers to the organisational signals that individuals lack agency to remedy apparent organisational problems. Finally, taught helplessness refers to the resignation by individuals to their lack of agency, in the face of the intense emotional labour that is required to complain about organisational problems. These processes can be seen in the experiences of academics in this thesis, building on the cultural and identity taxation concepts (Padilla, 1994; Hirshfield and Joseph, 2012) with the 'helpfulness trap.' This analysis illuminates the double bind added to this dilemma by the silence of transparency around pay and related elements of the Kafkaesque university bureaucracy, such as workload and progression. The silence of transparency refers to the pressure to shut down, or at least isolate, individual inequality concerns as anomalies because 'transparent' pay structures are in place. This leads to impunity for the perpetrators (even if unconsciously) of potentially unfair work allocation decisions.

Academic experiences of workload allocation yielded a sense of socially constructed meaninglessness to the different tasks of work and the time they are expected to take (Clegg *et al.*, 2016). Although not explicitly linked to pay, the workload model was frequently described by academics as a tool that creates and sustains gendered and racialised inequality in the institutions. For salaried academics[90], the workload model is used to allocate teaching and admin academic duties, alongside research time, by applying a notional value of hours to different tasks. Although all full-time staff had the same number of hours 'available' for this model[91], the actual assignment and division of those hours clearly caused tension. A Beta female academic observed that one reason for this, emphasising the notional nature of the model, was that "we have found somehow certain administrative jobs have been given quite a generous allowance in terms of hours, but certain

[90] This contrasts with hourly paid staff, where the workload model sometimes becomes a formula to directly calculate pay.

[91] Those on teaching-only contracts have more hours available for the model than those on teaching and research contracts, as the former are expected to undertake more teaching activities.

teaching jobs have been underestimated in terms of how much work they require." An Alpha white female professor expressed a similar concern, recalling a male colleague's experience:

> That is a really huge way that inequality comes, through career progression as well. I think they should be doing much more to monitor it to really see what's going on. We have a workload model, but there's stuff that goes on in the workload model and then people don't check it and all sorts. I know somebody had their admin roles super weighted and there was just no reason. It was a new admin role, but it was not mysteriously difficult. It just got super weighted to nearly twice some of the other roles. The guy did like three funding applications and he also had less courses. He just did three funding applications. He's now got a grant, which will help him get promoted.

Many academics found it difficult to speak up on these matters. The existence of a workload model was seen from their organisation's perspective to have already created transparency and fairness. This is part of the performance of a 'transparent' system, as explored in Chapter 6. Therefore, to question what one is being asked to do, suggests a problem with the individual. To question the functioning of the workload model where one has been established is difficult for individual staff members. Once a system is established, institutions are reluctant to entertain questions of the system that an institution perceives as transparent. When some of the academics in my study tried to question their workload allocation after it had been established, they suffered retribution from authority and this taught them to cease complaining and to remain silent, at least in the face of authority. This retribution came in the form of more work, not less, after expressing concern about their workload. A Beta white female academic described a female professor who felt that supporting the department's Athena SWAN application was hindering her ability to advance her personal research. Athena SWAN is supposed to recognise *good* gender equality employment practice in HE. The woman described her colleague's effort to question her workload with their HoD, noting that:

> She was deeply unhappy because while she was lumbered with Athena SWAN work, she went and said, 'But I'm a professor. I'm a researcher. I need to do my research.' Her perception was she got more work.

The same academic described similar perceived treatment of another female academic colleague:

> She came back from maternity leave only to find herself doing more than before maternity leave. So, when she raised the question, she was given even more work. Not less. So, basically, what people are learning is that if they complain, they get a worse outcome, and therefore, people are being conditioned not to complain.

Ahmed (2018b) cautioned that actions that cause fatigue as a response to complaint, can themselves be a form of management control, writing "You tire people out so they are too tired to

address what makes them too tired." Fatigue was evident in several interviewees who sought to redress their perceived unfair treatment.

Clear evidence that women and BAME academics experienced this 'helpfulness trap' arose in both institutions. However, inspiration for the term stemmed from a white male professor at University Alpha, who observed that this phenomenon harmed colleagues because the promotion system yielded 'managed inaction' (Clegg *et al.*, 2016) from those with decision-making power. The professor felt that the promotion policy prevented decision-makers from awarding promotions to those who were clearly harmed by this 'helpfulness trap.' The hazards of expending too much effort on 'helpfulness' that would not be rewarded were clearly apparent to him, although he framed this as a choice that his female colleagues were making. He advised women to make better choices so that the decision-makers would be able to help them. Thinking about professorial banding and academic promotion criteria in particular, the professor felt that women tended to veer from research activities in favour of pastoral support to students. He noted:

> I try to make sure with young women I talk to…to sort of say to them be careful of all these various traps. So, there are all these…gendered traps that women fall into, which is, you know, not publishing research, being the person students go to all the time.

While the professor acknowledged that pastoral support was notionally recognised in the promotion criteria matrix, he believed that it was not rewarded "as much as writing your monograph." He went on to describe a female colleague in his department, whom he admired. He was concerned that she was falling into this 'helpfulness trap.' He noted that "you can see that she's being loaded with more pastoral things that are not, they are not the things that are going to get her rewarded." An Alpha white female academic observed such overloading as a trend throughout her department as well. She noted:

> Mid-career women are basically running the department; whereas, senior-career men are not, and they should be. So, there are a lot of people who are getting paid, the people who are getting paid the most aren't doing the most work.

This further underscores the point that academic promotion rewards prior achievement, yet it impacts pay regardless of future work.

However, academics in both institutions experienced 'taught helplessness' (Clegg *et al.*, 2016) to remedy the 'helpfulness trap' problem, even as they realised they were trapped. An Alpha BAME male academic described the pressure he felt to undertake work of little value to his own promotion, in order to avoid being perceived as difficult:

> You know, there are things that we do to signal that we're not problematic but actually then themselves become problematic…So, if you asked an academic, academics are notoriously independent, so if you asked an academic to do some task which is institutionally important but has no positive impact on your career, or it is difficult to evidence a positive impact on your career… So, you're asked to be an admissions tutor. You don't really want to do it. If you're sort of white, middle class male, you'd probably say you don't want to do it and you're unlikely to get forced to do it. If you're, and I would describe this, as, if you're from certain protected characteristics, if you're minority ethnic, if you're female, yeah, maybe even if you're disabled, any of these things, they are more likely to make you want to show that you are a good corporate citizen and so, you say yes…The problem is it may take up a lot of your time, some of which is not abated for, and therefore, you do less research and that means that at some point, someone's going to say your research performance is not up to scratch. Or you can't get promoted even if you're sacrificing.

The academic that felt this way in his own workplace was perceived as a minority ethnic man by colleagues. When asked about the pressure of this 'helpfulness trap' to be a good corporate citizen, a BAME female academic agreed that the concept also resonated with her, particularly as a woman. It was something she had discussed with fellow female academics who had observed themselves and many other colleagues stuck as a senior lecturer for around a decade. She said of this pressure:

> I think that comes through in this department in terms of gender as well, to be honest, those kinds of, yeah, corporate citizenship roles, as you've called them, are mostly done by women, and that was again a conversation that was being had while people were staying on the SL band forever and ever and ever, and it was like, so, we're doing all the kind of work, while the men are off writing books and it's the books that are counting for the promotion. Yeah. I don't know that I felt it particularly as a black woman, personally…it is as a woman.

Related illustrations of the 'taught helplessness' of being caught in the 'helpfulness trap' emerged in University Beta. For example, a BAME female professor recalled that earlier in her career, understanding the stated importance of the workload model to ensure the fair distribution of tasks, she had dared to question her HoD when she was asked her to take on additional work. Although she ended up doing the additional work anyway, the fact that she had questioned was referenced as a mark against her when she sought support for promotion from the same HoD later on:

> He said he doesn't believe I make a contribution to the [department]. So, I showed him my CV and I told him don't you think this is a contribution? Then he said, yeah, but you know, I asked you to do two things and you questioned it, and I said, what do you mean? You know, at the end I did it because I was told off, so I had to do it. I was just wondering why the additional work was given to me. What is the logic behind it? But obviously, you are not supposed to question this.

Following on from this experience, although she admitted she had on-going concerns about the fairness of her pay and workload allocation, she conceded:

> I don't talk about it to HR or senior management because I don't think they will listen because they will just think that I am unpleasant. Nothing will come out of it, so I don't even attempt to do that, which is really sad, actually.

When academics are taught by managers that to question their treatment when they feel it hinders their promotion is punishable, then managerial control over employees to comply with existing inequalities is damaging. Academics learn that to complain is to become visible and vulnerable to retribution, but carrying on doing the excessive administrative, pastoral, and diversity work hurts their career progression. Academics can see the 'helpfulness trap' they face, but have limited power to remedy their treatment, because the Kafkaesque bureaucracy of the promotions process engenders feelings of meaninglessness about the workload model and taught helplessness in academics, while the transparent promotion criteria provides cover for managed inaction by promotion-deciders to avoid recognising when academics experience this undue burden.

8.3 Bureaucratic Reward Processes and Policy: Processes that Produce Organisational Inequality (OSE Theme Four)

Turning to the second area of thematic analysis for this chapter, the operation of bureaucratic processes and policies, which appear to create transparency around pay setting mechanisms and progression decisions at both institutions, demands analysis through the lens of Acker's (2006b, 2006a) inequality regime component: processes that produce inequality. Although individuals at the centre of both institutions drew a clear distinction between pay and promotion, the two processes are linked. Academic promotion unlocks access to higher placement on the pay scale or above it. Processes, including the initial placement on the pay scale at the time of recruitment, pay rises associated with promotion, and professorial pay determination all ultimately impact on an academic's remuneration. In addition to pay, promotion also helps academics accrue what an Alpha male professor referred to as kudos, indicating a sort of intangible degree of respect and esteem in the field. Kudos, however, does not save for a mortgage down payment or grow a pension pot for retirement. These were both real-life struggles that several female academics in this study experienced as a result of being unable to achieve promotion and the tangible pay rises that ought to go with it. This section will reveal how social pay comparison can help staff to reveal the extent to which 'transparent' bureaucratic processes reinforce inequality in these workplaces.

8.3.1 Recruitment Pay Offers

Although employment relationships are inherently asymmetrical with the power tipped in favour of employers (Sisson, 2016), the point just before accepting a new job typically opens the strongest window of power for employees. This is the point at which it is most possible to negotiate one's

salary. Recognition of this has spawned a body of victim-blaming research that suggests that men are more likely to negotiate their salary than women and that this partially explains the persistent GPG. If true, this could be linked to the different social expectations placed on men and women (Babcock, Engberg and Greenbaum, 2005; Babcock and Laschever, 2009; Blau and Kahn, 2017). However, the validity of this gendered distinction has been questioned. McGovern et al.'s (2007) analysis of the Working in Britain survey found some gendered differences in hiring salary negotiation, but not in later pay rise negotiation. Artz et al.'s (2018) more recent analysis of the Australian Workplace Relations Survey, found that women ask for pay rises and promotions at similar rates to men but that women are less likely to get them. This finding chimes with the experiences of several white and BAME female academics that were described earlier in this chapter who tried to say no to excessive, unrewarded work and were made to do that work anyway.

Policy shapers at both institutions readily acknowledged that they used a recruitment practice that undermines the window of strength potentially enjoyed by new hires. They asked applicants to reveal their current salary before they come to the negotiating table. This strengthens the employer's hand because they then precisely know the applicant's leveraging ability. This knowledge/power imbalance is problematic because it allows employers to hire candidates, who may have faced discriminatory salary depression elsewhere, at lower rates than they might have done without access to their salary history. The candidate equally may accept the offer as an improvement on their previous earnings, without knowing that more could have been on the table. This practice allows employers to turn prior pay discrimination into market justification to pay women and minorities less (Monopoli, 2016). The practice is rapidly attracting condemnation by US equality advocates, who have succeeded in enacting legislation that bans this practice for some employers in 17 states, along with Washington, DC and Puerto Rico, as of 28 February 2020 (Herzfeld, 2019; HR Dive, 2020). This policy concept has begun to attract endorsements from advocacy groups in the UK, such as the Young Women's Trust (Clarke, 2018). However, university employers appear to prize maintaining the imbalance, having full knowledge of pay at their institution, while those potentially recruited to the institution do not. In late 2017, the Russell Group issued a response to plans by the Office for Students to require universities to publish full remuneration details of all staff earning £150,000 or more annually. The prestigious university network argued that showing their hand in this way would "risk undermining the ability of institutions to compete in an international market for academic and professional services talent" (Russell Group, 2017, p. 12).

A policy shaper made Alpha's interest in maintaining power over new recruits through this practice clear, by explaining that recruits were free to refuse to provide their current salary if they were willing to forgo using their current salary as a bargaining chip. The shaper recalled that a recent appointee had refused to provide their current salary, so the institution had worked out an offer and the appointee had then asked for more. The shaper said that the institution was then unwilling to negotiate, yet indicated that had the same candidate originally complied with the reporting exercise, they would likely have been given a larger offer:

> So, if you don't know what somebody's salary is and you make an offer that you think is a reasonable one for what they're worth because you've gone through a process of judging them, that's fine. Ok. But they have to take the consequences of that. If you say, well, I think you're only worth so much and it happens to be less than you're being paid at the moment that presents a challenge to the person wanting to move. I think, there's a sort of be careful what you wish for there. On the other hand, if you do know and you're going to make an offer that's a bit below what they're currently getting, I suspect most managers would try and find a reason for paying at least what they're getting.

By contrast, policy shapers and many academics spoke about pay decisions, particularly for lecturer through readers, as something concrete. There is a pay scale. It is publicly available online. However, suggestions of slippage at the recruitment stage emerged. A white female academic characterised the reality of Alpha pay thus:

> It's quite fair and transparent, but then when you start to dig a bit deeper, you see that different people are treated differently. That's quite surprising, especially because there is, then, when it comes to that, there is very little transparency about this and usually when these things are found out, so to speak, that creates friction.

A union representative recalled that engaging in social comparison of pay had helped a female professor learn of apparent inconsistency between recruitment pay offers. The woman had been hired at University Alpha as a professor. A couple of years later, a man, who had unsuccessfully applied for the same post she had filled, successfully applied for another professorial vacancy in her same department. The representative described the incident:

> She discovered he was being paid more than her. So, then, she complained to management. She asked for an explanation as to why she would be appointed in preference to him and yet be paid less than him when he's appointed two years' later. They went into a scurry and upped her pay to match his. One could have argued it ought to be more than his, but I don't think that occurred to anybody at the time. So, occasionally, people do exchange information and you could see why management wouldn't want them to do that.

Another Alpha white woman, a recently hired lecturer, was alerted to the starting salary of a new lecturer in her department by a female colleague who had unsuccessfully applied. Her friend mentioned the advertised range for the job. Although the title was exactly the same as the title the lecturer had acquired in the department a year prior, the bottom of the advertised range then was £5-6,000 more than what she was paid. She remarked that "I just wondered why it's so much more than when we were being hired? Beyond that, I didn't ask anyone." A further Alpha white female academic learned of another anomaly from another female colleague, the primary person with whom she said she discussed pay. Her friend had been on the recruitment panel for four new lecturers. She said the recruitment panel would not normally know about the pay of the candidates, but her friend heard somehow. Although all four were hired as lecturers, two were being paid as senior lecturers. She recalled that "the two that had gotten it were male and at least one of the ones that hadn't gotten it was a woman. And we were saying if she ever finds out, she must be so pissed off because she probably never asked and therefore didn't get." This comment again blames the woman by assuming that the woman had not attempted to negotiate, rather than considering that the woman might have tried to negotiate unsuccessfully.

Inconsistencies in the placement on the pay scale at the time of hiring can have a detrimental effect on an academic's pay and superannuation. Yet, when academics try to discuss these problems, they can be met with a brick wall by institutional actors who are unwilling to acknowledge that any prior mistreatment has taken place. This will be discussed further in the next sub-section, where promotion is presented as a remedy for acknowledged past underpayment. Academics can also be met with intransigence at the recruitment stage. A Beta BAME female professor recounted her experience of pay secrecy when she was being recruited to Beta as a professor. She had tried to do everything right to prepare for negotiations, including seeking knowledge about pay from other professors in her field. She knew previous job adverts were another way to learn what employers were offering for similar roles, although "the difficulty will always be that people are offering a grade range. You don't know where eventually people get appointed." She had also looked at figures for University Beta in the Times Higher Education (THE) pay survey to help calibrate her initial request. Of course, the THE does not break down data by discipline, so she had directly asked a colleague in a similar role what he was earning, but she was frustrated that he refused to answer directly. She recalled that "the only thing he revealed was the size of the step up from his past salary without mentioning any numbers." Armed with the information that she had been able to collect, and having considered what minimum pay rise would make the move worth it, she initially found no traction when discussing her case with HR. She revealed:

> The minute the negotiation started and the job offer was made to me via phone, the person concerned actually said to me 'Women tend to do themselves down in these deals, so we'll try and be fair, shall we?' But as soon as I said what I wanted to earn, they said no. So, there was no negotiation. Actually, the whole process stalled for about two weeks. There was no negotiating. It was, 'This is our offer. This is where we are.' So, having started the process saying women aren't very good at this, they weren't willing to budge, for a woman, anyway.

The HR employee would only tell her that the offer was based on market data. Policy shapers at both institutions had described this market data that was leveraged against her, as well as its confidential nature, in the interviews for this thesis. Universities procure access to this data by providing their own data to their employer's association. The Universities and Colleges Employers Association (2019) (UCEA) conducts the UCEA Senior Staff Survey, which covers professor and other senior staff remuneration and commissions the XpertHR (2019) Higher Education Salary Survey, which includes remuneration for academics below the professoriate and other non-academic staff. These surveys provide the market data that is used by member institutions to make remuneration decisions. They did not explain this to her, although she would not have been able to access this proprietary data if they had. She was concerned that the data they were referring to did not acknowledge her specific sub-field, which she believed was a difficult to recruit area, but they would not clarify. She said of HR:

> They were claiming that they had market data on what people earned, and I didn't know what the market data was. I didn't know what data they used, because [they] were claiming that they had information that they had pitched their offer against. It was all very difficult because I didn't know what that information was. I didn't have any idea what anybody else earned. It's like, right, you're operating in a black hole and you don't know what's reasonable or not reasonable really.

Facing this black hole, she nearly turned down the job because the sole offer on the table was not worth it. She recalled that "when I spoke to the person who was actually going to employ me to tell [them] that, they just said 'Well, let me see what I can do' and within a day, there was another offer on the table." She accepted that offer, the minimum she had calculated that could make the move worth it for her, but it never would have come without substantial advocacy from her future HoD. This advocacy was successful even though HR had characterised the initial offer as non-negotiable when the BAME woman tried to negotiate directly. Without the intervention of a HoD who made the effort to try to remedy the situation, HR's apparent effort to cap payroll spending would have cost University Beta a valuable hire.

Another BAME female professor had also learned the hard lesson that if you do not ask, you do not get at Beta. Her first permanent job at University Beta had been as a lecturer. She had felt grateful

for the permanent contract, which was her first since completing her PhD, and so she had accepted the initial pay offer without negotiating. She remembered the reaction this elicited from her HoD. "{They] said, 'Oh, wow, this has gone much easier than I expected.' So, obviously, [they were] expecting some sort of negotiation." She did not have a HoD advocating for her pay, like the above-described Beta BAME female professor whose future HoD advocated for her when HR refused to negotiate on pay or like the Alpha white female described in Chapter 6 whose HoD actively pushed her to negotiate harder when she was joining the institution as a new lecturer. Suspecting that she had left money at the table, this Beta BAME female academic had asked around about the experiences of several other new lecturers who were hired by her department at the same time. She recalled that "when I talked to them, I actually learned that all of them had negotiated. The ones I talked to had negotiated and they had got much better pay than I did because I got the minimum possible. They couldn't give me any less."

This section has revealed numerous details about the process of reward decisions, which contrast markedly with the presentation of recruitment pay setting as a transparent and impartial process. The universities have shown how they prioritise maintaining their advantage over applicants by using pay information and market data, and they even expressed a willingness to refuse to negotiate with applicants who failed to hand over their prior salary history from the outset. Social pay comparison and other social interactions were shown to reveal several instances of men being hired after women in the same role but at higher pay, and also unexplained, unquestioned shifts in the advertised range for similar roles in a short span of time. The power of HoDs to shift (or not) pay decisions from the default position was also revealed. These experiences revealed that inconsistent recruitment pay decisions sometimes leave new hires at the mercy of HoDs who may or may not champion them and whose decision to do so, or not, appears to risk little scrutiny.

8.3.2 Pay Rises Associated with Promotion

Concerning inconsistency of pay decisions continues in the workplace. Blackaby et al. (2005, p. F89) wrote that "in the UK, there are wage scales for each rank (Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, and Reader) other than Professor (which has a minimum salary level and is then subject to negotiation)." It should be clear what pay rise would be associated with a given promotion. Surprisingly, opacity and greyness around pay rises associated with promotion, which was often discovered through incidental conversations with colleagues, also emerged prominently in both institutions. This may be more easily accepted as legitimate given, for instance, that a white female academic perceived promotion in University Alpha to be an intellectual achievement, rather than a step to unlocking

higher pay. Recalling the promotions briefing that she received as part of her probation process, she reflected:

> The whole thing seems as if promotion is much more about the kind of promotion itself, rather than the money…It's presented as though, actually, the whole sector is very much presented as people are here not for the money but for the intellect…When they were talking about promotion, the money was not mentioned.

Similarly, a Beta policy shaper emphasised that the promotion policy is about the promotion decision only and not about pay, although they also asserted that all promotions come with *at least* one spinal point of a pay rise. A particular grey area appeared at the stage of promotion from senior lecturer to reader. These job ranks were assigned the same pay grade in both institutions, which appeared to yield a variety of starting reader pay, somewhat depending on how long the academic had been a senior lecturer prior to promotion.

An Alpha white male academic explained his understanding of the loose link between promotion and pay rises, noting that "every year there is a round of promotions. Some of them are, they lead to a salary increase, but some areas are just the same salary, no? For instance, between the senior lecturer and reader, there is no salary difference." His understanding was reinforced by formal advice he received from a senior professor following his decision in 2016/17 not to apply for promotion because he did not feel he had time. Already a senior lecturer, he recalled that the professor advised him that "you better apply for a professorship next time you decide to apply because that's going to be an increase of salary."

A frustration expressed by several female academics was that although their seemingly unfair pay was acknowledged, there was reluctance from authority figures to take any action. Openly acknowledged problems were left to fester for months and even years. In some cases, problems with pay were discussed candidly amongst colleagues and with management, yet nothing was done, short of encouraging the academic to apply for promotion. An Alpha white female professor learned that she was paid much less when she had become a reader than two other readers, who had been promoted at the same time in the same department. She believed this was due to the shared senior lecturer/reader pay band and the convention that Alpha moved academics two spinal points up on promotion to reader. She had only been a senior lecturer for a year, while her two colleagues had been only two spinal points away from the top of their pay grade on promotion. As the gaps between spinal points on Alpha's pay scale were not consistent in that grade, not only did her

colleagues receive higher pay, but a larger percentage raise for the same promotion. She learned of the discrepancy through a conversation with her friend:

> It came about because [my female friend] and I…were going 'Oh my God, we are going to get more money if we get promoted,' and then she did get more money and I got like 800 pounds a year more money for being promoted to reader. So, I was like 'oh my God, the pay rise was really rubbish,' and she was like 'No it wasn't.' And I'm like 'What do you mean?' So, then we kind of, I kind of realised this and I went to see my [HoD], and I was like 'Look, this is absolutely ludicrous. Was there some judgement process whereby I was judged to be less, not worth the money?'

Her HoD agreed that the situation was unfair and promised to speak to HR. The woman also went to HR, assuming that this was a simple case of the rules not being followed properly. However, she acknowledged that "it hasn't been really simple. It's still going on two years later." She soon received an email from someone in senior management, agreeing that her situation was unfair and promising to sort it out. Her HoD planned to put her forward for a performance-related pay award instead to resolve the issue but missed the deadline. The HoD pressed for a resolution anyway but was told by HR that there was nothing that could be done until the next year's award cycle. The professor felt defeated by the continual lack of progress, despite having had her problem acknowledged at high levels. She explained that "I found it difficult to continue to raise it with my [HoD], so I wasn't on it as much as I should have been…I sent an email like once every couple of months, rather than badgering because I felt difficult."

In the next promotion cycle, she was promoted to professor, following a successful appeal of an initial rejection. Her HoD had assured her beforehand that they would still apply for the previously missed performance award regardless of the promotion outcome, to resolve the prior acknowledged promotion pay rise unfairness. Her HoD followed through but the effort was rejected by HR on the grounds that the woman had recently been promoted. She said:

> [My HoD] said 'Oh, well, I need to talk to them about this but I'm not going to because HR are a mess. So, I'm going to talk to them when we get new HR people.' New HR people come along. I spent the entire summer emailing them once every three weeks to try and get this sorted out and they are still not answering.

The promotion, of course, did not resolve the pay and pension contributions that the woman had lost in the years waiting for the acknowledged promotion pay rise inconsistency to be remedied. A Beta white female academic experienced similar frustration with the promotion pay rise being presented as a solution to acknowledged prior unfairness. The academic had originally been hired on a fixed-term teaching-only contract. She suspected her original salary had drawn on someone's

research funds and was set based on what was left, rather than based on her role. Her contract had been extended several times and she was approaching the four-year mark.[92]

It was common knowledge in her department that she was the lowest paid lecturer, despite doing more work, especially teaching work, than many of her colleagues and often spending weekends fixing the work of others. After she consulted the UCU, her department head, and HR, their responses led her to conclude that, barring legal action, she would have to apply for promotion (and ignore the previous four years of underpayment). The message seemed to be that past underpayment resides within a Pandora's Box, resting on a pedestal of a 'transparent' pay system. What may be discussed formally is only how to improve one's circumstances in the future. She explained that "I don't know if it's just a can of worms and they're just like, shit, if we deal with you, what will happen with everyone else? But it's like, you know, that's your problem." Placing the onus of remedy on her to increase her pay through the promotion process, despite her underpayment having been widely acknowledged within her department, did not sit well with the academic, who described her situation:

> It's a lot of work…I'm just like, hold on a minute. You're telling me I'm not being paid enough money and it's really, really unfair. But now what you want me to do, and you're also telling me I'm doing too much work and my workload is a lot higher than everybody else's and that's not fair, and now you want me to fill out a load more fucking forms? When have I got time to do that?…Hold on, you fucked up, lots of times. You've acknowledged you've fucked up and my position is not what it should be, and actually, what's your solution to it? Fill out more forms! Beg for something that you say I'm deserving of!

Surely the process of promotion is meant to be a tool to reward professional growth, not an instrument to remedy and absolve the institution of responsibility for acknowledged unfairness?

The pay rise grey area for senior lecturer to reader promotion was also apparent in Beta. Equalities concerns arising from the placement of senior lecturer and reader in the same pay band at both case study universities is not surprising. Guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) (2019) on equal pay and job grading cautions against the potentially indefensible pay differentials that even over lapping pay grades can create. Although Beta's academic promotion guidance document provided a date at which all promotion decisions take effect, including any relevant pay rises, the document was notably silent on how the rises were calculated. A white

[92] After four years, UK employers must make fixed-term employees permanent, barring an objective business reason not to (Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service, 2018).

female academic recalled her experience of promotion to reader and her surprise when she was told she would receive no pay rise at all:

> When I started here, I was a senior lecturer, but I accepted a new job and I said actually in [my home country], if I got a job, I'd actually be a professor based on my experience. [The HoD] said then at the time, no, we can't do that because I think the position was advertised…as lecturer/senior lecturer…so initially they offered me lecturer and I said no. It should be senior lecturer at least, if not a reader. Then they said no, we can't hire you as a reader, but you can apply, I mean, once you are here, then you can obviously apply for promotion. So, I got a major grant shortly after I came here…I applied then immediately for promotion and got it actually…So then I asked how much more do I get? And I was told you don't get any more. It's just a title…Up to this day, I don't know if that is really true or if other people who were promoted got more. I have no idea.

Although the incident described was prior to 2016/17, it is interesting to consider this in contrast to the earlier assertion made by a Beta policy maker that *all* promotions come with at least a one spinal point pay rise. A BAME female professor reported that she had known she was at the top of the automatic increments within the senior lecturer pay band when she was finally promoted to reader. She had applied and been rejected before, so she had been stuck at senior lecturer for many years. However, unlike the previous academic, she reported that she had still received a pay rise on promotion to reader, although it was a modest sum of about £1,000 per year. Reflecting on the benefit that would come from greater transparency of the promotion pay rise process, another Beta BAME female professor observed that, while achieving promotion is openly celebrated "whether promotion is associated with a pay rise, that's not revealed ever."

8.3.3 Professorial Banding

The contrasting professorial pay structures in University Alpha, which had professorial pay banding, and University Beta, which did not, were described in Chapter 6. While Alpha's aggregate professorial GPG was widening leading up to 2016/17, Alpha policy shapers used the robustness of their transparent banding process as a defence against criticism of the GPG of the full professoriate, whilst sharply resisting the idea of communicating the band placement of individual professors. Their regular equal pay audits did not report the number of staff within each band of the GPG analysis, beyond noting that the gap in the top band could not be reported due to data protection because of insufficient numbers of women. The case was the same for the ethnicity pay gap. Employer communication around professorial pay banding appeared to create a post-hoc justification—grounded in the performance of transparent accountability—for the existing pay disparity within the professoriate due to vertical gender and ethnic segregation. These difficulties are unsurprising. As guidance from the EHRC (2019) on equal pay and job grading notes, having

multiple scales or too many grades presents an inequality risk. It seems that in the case of University Alpha's professorial pay banding, they may have created more bands than they have distinct roles, potentially risking these post-hoc justification concerns.

A University Alpha white female professor agreed that while the professorial banding criteria matrix is transparent, what band individual professors are on is not. When she became a professor, she was invited to a celebratory reception where she recalled the VC proudly announcing that for the first time the same number of men and women had been promoted to professor. This led to further conversation with members of senior management. She recalled hearing someone explain:

> The main pay gap is in the professorial banding. There's hardly any women in the higher bands. And, you know, we talked about this with [senior management]. This was like freely talked about. There was no hush-hush about it.

This led to an external recruitment-based explanation by a remuneration policy shaper, who explained that while men hired externally as professors tended to be on higher bands, women tended to be on the lower bands, following internal promotion to professor, as they did not yet fulfil the criteria of the higher bands. The shaper went on to explain that the university was "really trying to recruit women but one of the problems is that women are less mobile than men." The conversation indicates a lack of institutional self-criticism, similar to that suggested by women-only promotion schemes. University Alpha had a mentoring scheme that was designed to help women through the promotion process, but such schemes risk the appearance of blaming the victim. The assumption is that individuals who are struggling to progress through the system need to be improved, rather than casting reflective scrutiny on why the system is producing inequality of outcomes (Devos, 2008; Morley, 2013; Dashper, 2019).

An Alpha UCU representative suggested that the professorial banding criteria are written in such a way to further enable the individualisation of inequality experiences:

> We've got these criteria which look very, very nice, but you could interpret them in almost any way. Like I think the first criteria for [the bottom professor band] for research is something like a significant and sustained output of, I don't know, world leading or whatever, or something research, you know? What is significant and sustained? What's the quantity?' They don't want to say that because they want that flexibility to promote who they want really, which is what happens.

Unpublished analysis (Frank, 2019) of professorial banding and re-banding exercises at two UK research-intensive universities demonstrated that the exercises had virtually no impact on the professorial GPG, even slightly exacerbating it. This was partly attributed to vertical segregation

across the bands, as has been described in University Alpha. Frank (2019) modelled how banding procedures may actually amplify a taste for discrimination in those who assess the professors, relative to previous practices of annual individual pay awards. He concluded by advising organisations to mainstream equality by linking equality outcomes to managers' appraisals, like other managerial objectives. Following an analysis of the failure of leading public health universities to improve gender and ethnic disparities, Khan et al. (2019) argued for a similar alignment of equality outcomes with business incentives. They suggested that staff diversity statistics ought to be included in university rankings, such as those produced by the THE.

University Beta had individual pay awards, not professorial banding. While Beta's aggregate professorial GPG was diminishing in the years preceding 2016/17, a policy shaper expressed concern about the active promotion of pay communication secrecy during a several year effort to narrow this gap (Chapter 6). Arguably, this review and correction could occur—although in silence—precisely because Beta did not have a structured professorial banding system. However, the achievement was dependent on the will of those with power over the university at the time. Furthermore, nothing was evident to suggest that the review process led to changes in the processes that created the initial gap. Indeed, it would be surprising to locate such evidence since the only open acknowledgement that the review even occurred was a few brief retrospective words in Beta's institutional Athena SWAN application.

A Beta policy shaper characterised professorial pay as aligning with some sort of pay scale, although an essentially open-ended one. However, the academic perspective indicated that the existence of this 'scale' was unclear. A Beta HoD observed:

> Once you get to the professorial level, then you're in an off-scale world and even though I'm [HoD], I still haven't actually seen the professorial salary scale. That's something I have to ask specific information from HR, if I'm negotiating a professor's salary, I have to say, you know, something in this range and then they come back to me with points…I've never actually seen the professorial salary range.

This reinforces the point made in Chapter 6 that the radical pay transparency afforded to HoDs over the pay of their immediate colleagues, was not crafted with the intent to empower HoDs to become equality change agents. However, HoDs were expected to recommend a pay rise as part of their role to evaluate professors in an annual review process. Despite the extensive, although hidden, efforts to remedy the Beta professorial GPG, when asked whether HoDs received guidance from the centre for making these recommendations, a Beta HoD unequivocally explained:

> No, absolutely not. No guidance. So, I put down for more and then, you know, there are many more requests. Then it all gets cut. There seems to be a ceremonial aspect to this that you just ask for more than you know you're going to get and then you get less. At least that's how I play it for bonuses and professorial review.

The handling of professorial pay banding in Alpha and individual professorial pay awards in Beta and associated communication by these employers suggests a common thread running through professorial pay setting practices. That is, a strong inclination by employers to defend the existing reward systems and individualise the problems that professors face, even if remedies were being applied behind closed doors in Beta. Even still these remedies did not appear to alter the processes that led to the gap that was being narrowed. Yet again, we see the silence of transparency in university bureaucratic processes on pay and related policy and procedures—revealed through the interaction of professors with senior management in Alpha and HoDs with HR in Beta—rather than open, institutionally self-reflective transparency.

8.4 Summary

This chapter has sought to answer the research question: How does the pay 'transparency agenda' within UK universities influence awareness of pay (and related progression) inequality by academics, particularly women and BAME academics? The answer appears to be, not very effectively. In answering this question, this chapter has further explored the pay 'transparency paradox' that was revealed in Chapter 6. Figure 8-1 summarises the concepts that emerged through this analysis as the key theoretical contributions, including the functioning of the income-talk taboo and employee social pay comparison behaviour (and other social interactions) as the two remaining components of the OSE.

Figure 8-1: Operationalising Organisational Salary Environment: The Income-Talk Taboo and Employee Social Pay Comparison Behaviour (& Social Interaction)

	Inequality Regime Component	'Pay Communication' Typology	Theme	Organisational Salary Environment (OSE)
Row	**Analytical Framework**	**Employer Behaviour**	**Operationalisation inside organisation**	**Theoretical Contribution**
C	Management's control over employee compliance with inequalities	Employee Restriction	Informal Pay Secrecy Norms (Indirect/Internalized Managerial Control, Kafkaesque 'citizenship' expectations)	Income-Talk Taboo
D	Processes producing organizational inequality	Procedural Communication	Bureaucratic Reward Process and Policy (Recruitment Pay, Promotion Pay, Professorial Banding)	Employee Social Pay Comparison Behaviour (& Social Interaction)
	Acker (2006a; 2006b) (Chapter 2)	*Expanded by author from Marasi and Bennett (2016) and reflections on pay communication literature research gap (Chapter 3)*	*Synthesised by author from HE inequality literature (Chapter 4)*	*Developed by author as theoretical contribution of the thesis*

The primary concepts along the informal pay secrecy norms theme of Row C in Figure 8-1 led to the emergence of the mechanisms through which the income-talk taboo strengthened managerial control over employee compliance with inequalities. These mechanisms included i) indirect managerial control, particularly driven by HoD and HR professional behaviour; ii) internalised managerial control, particularly driven by the pressure to trust bureaucratic systems, the norm that academia is 'beyond pay' and the fear of repercussions; and iii) the 'helpfulness trap,' which creates unspoken barriers to progression, especially faced by BAME and female academics. These forms of control were reinforced by the societal income-talk taboo to discourage open discussion of pay and progression.

Although there was some variation in behaviour, HoDs could be seen to exert a considerable degree of indirect managerial control to reinforce the pay secrecy norm. This was evidenced through conversations that seemed to be intended to discourage academics from discussing their pay openly. This control may be driven by HoDs' awareness that actual pay diverged some from stated pay structures, their lack of power (or perceived lack of power) to resolve pay inequality, or their lack of willingness to try, which may itself be driven by HoDs' awareness of the income-talk taboo.

A number of aspects of internalised managerial control also emerged from the reflections of academics on their workplace experiences. Internalised managerial controls included an expectation

of implicit trust in bureaucratic systems of pay setting and associated progression, the pay secrecy norm as an organising process, individualising responsibility for problems experienced rather than acknowledging their structural causes, taking pleasure from work (and the idea that academia is a calling and therefore exempt from 'minor' concerns like pay), and the fear of being seen as a troublemaker or stirring resentment.

A particularly damaging example of internalised managerial control, drawing on the fear of being seen as a troublemaker or sparking resentment, was also the unspoken norm of the 'helpfulness trap' (Padilla, 1994; Turner, 2002; Joseph and Hirshfield, 2011; Hirshfield and Joseph, 2012) within the universities' 'Kafkaesque' power and bureaucracy (Clegg *et al.*, 2016). From the perspective of BAME academics, women, and especially BAME women academics, there was a double bind to go above and beyond to support pastoral, administrative, and diversity work inside their departments, but also to remain silent when this work was not rewarded by career progression. Some academics could see the 'helpfulness trap' that they faced, but they had limited power to remedy their treatment, because the 'Kafkaesque' (Clegg *et al.*, 2016) promotions process engendered feelings of meaninglessness about the workload model and taught helplessness in academics, while the transparent promotion criteria provided cover for managed inaction by decision-makers, who might otherwise choose to recognise BAME women academics for their undue burden.

Along Row D of Figure 8-1, this chapter has illustrated how social pay comparison and other social interactions where pay setting practices are discussed, help to reveal how 'transparent' bureaucratic processes reproduced inequality in these workplaces. The discussion of recruitment pay offers revealed several details about the process that contrast with its presentation as a transparent, impartial process. The universities were shown to prioritise maintaining their advantage over applicants in respect of pay information and market data, even expressing a willingness to punish applicants who failed to hand over their prior salary history. Social pay comparison and other social interactions revealed several instances of men hired after women, in the same role but at higher pay, as well as unexplained, unquestioned shifts even in the advertised range for similar roles in a short span of time. Finally, the power of HR and HoDs to shift (or not) pay decisions from the default position was revealed. These experiences revealed inconsistency, sometimes leaving new hires at the mercy of HoDs who may (or may not) choose to champion them, with little risk of scrutiny of those decisions. Despite a common understanding of there being pay ranges for different academic roles, communication at both institutions distanced the promotion process from the remuneration-setting process. Opacity and greyness around pay rises associated with promotion, often discovered

through incidental conversations with colleagues, also emerged prominently, particularly with the promotion from senior lecture to reader. Promotion was presented in both universities as an individual solution to openly acknowledged past unfairness in the pay setting processes. Finally, even though University Alpha had professorial pay banding and Beta did not, a consistent thread ran through professorial pay setting practices, which yet again revealed a strong inclination on the part of employers to publicly defend the system and individualise problems faced by professors, even if systematic remedies were being applied behind closed doors in Beta. Even these systematic remedies did not appear to seek to redress the system that led to the gaps being narrowed. The silence of transparency flowing from university bureaucratic processes on pay and related policy and procedures was revealed through the interaction of professors with senior management in Alpha and HoDs with HR in Beta—rather than open, institutionally self-reflective transparency.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

The silence of transparency functions as an organisational lubricant to maintain the functioning of the hierarchical power structures in academia. The purpose of this thesis has been to provide a novel approach to explaining the gender pay gap (GPG) and gender/ethnic pay gap (G/EPG) by interrogating accepted practices and settled social norms. This purpose has been fulfilled by developing a nuanced understanding of the role of organisational pay secrecy/transparency through critical analysis of the performance of the pay 'transparency agenda' within two UK universities, paying particular attention to the role of the income-talk taboo. This thesis has developed a multi-layered and nuanced illumination of the silence of transparency. This silence refers to the role that workplace pay transparency policies may serve to legitimise practices and factors that maintain or reinforce pay inequality and to individualise pay inequality concerns as anomalies because 'transparent' pay structures are in place. An original theoretical framework—the organisational salary environment (OSE)—has emerged from the empirical analysis of this thesis. The OSE provides an analytical framework to assess the mutually constitutive influence of employer strategies, social norms, and employee behaviour on the practical impact of organisational pay transparency efforts to reduce pay inequality.

This chapter will first present the theoretical and empirical contributions of this thesis through the primary and three sub-research questions. Secondly, the methodological contribution will be presented, which demonstrates the importance of a multi-layered, multi-strategy approach to analysing why UK higher education (HE) continues to struggle with a GPG and G/EPG. Next, the research limitations will be acknowledged. Additionally, updates to the research context since the 2016/17 academic year when the fieldwork was concentrated will be discussed. Importantly, key policy implications for pay transparency, pay inequality, and pay setting systems for both national governments and HE employers and plans to develop impact from this thesis will be reflected upon and asserted. Finally, recommendations for future research will be proposed.

9.2 Theoretical and Empirical Contributions

This section presents the key theoretical and empirical contributions of this thesis to the literature on the GPG and G/EPG, pay secrecy/transparency at work, and the UK HE sector. The primary theoretical contribution is an original and novel concept encapsulated in the OSE framework. The theoretical foundations of the OSE were constructed through a synthesis of existing academic literature (Chapters 2-4), and components of the framework and their interrelationship emerged

through empirical inquiry (Chapters 6-8). The OSE has three mutually-constitutive components; employer 'pay communication' policies (Marasi and Bennett, 2016), the income-talk taboo (Fox, 2014) and employee social pay comparison behaviours (and other social interactions) (Burchell and Yagil, 1997). The interlocking pressures from employers, the society in which an organisation is situated, and employees themselves serve to influence employee awareness of pay in their organisation. In this way, the OSE provides a feminist sociological explanation for organisational gender and ethnicity-based pay inequality, thus strengthening earlier critiques of human capital theory's inability to explain the GPG (Olsen and Walby, 2004; Blau and Kahn, 2007). The OSE also contrasts with the largely-US focused[93] industrial relations and labour law tendency to present a homogenous and uncritical acceptance of the income-talk taboo (Levine and Stanchi, 2001; Bierman and Gely, 2004; Edwards, 2005; Colella *et al.*, 2007; Lyons, 2012; Kulow, 2013; Kim, 2015). The OSE finally showcases the importance of critically assessing pay transparency in the context of increasing calls by government, employee rights advocates, and academics for transparency to combat the GPG (European Commission, 2014b; Kim, 2015; Trades Union Congress, 2015b). It is against this context of the growing global focus on the importance of pay transparency that this novel OSE framework offers promise as a tool to critically assess the effectiveness of pay transparency to narrow the GPG as it is actually practised—not only as it is preached.

It was never the aim of this thesis to suggest that pay transparency/secrecy alone could account for trends in pay inequality inside academia (or in other organisational contexts). Rather, the intention has always been to illuminate the relevance of pay transparency as an insufficiently researched contributing factor, which also intersects with other forces, such as those reviewed at the general level in Chapter 2, and applied to the HE context in Chapters 4 and 6. Through the development of a novel OSE framework, this thesis has met this aim. While this thesis has developed and applied the framework in the HE context, the OSE may be used in any organisational or sectoral context where the battle against pay inequality proves to be elusive. In that sense, the OSE is also aligned with its inequality regimes foundation by providing a framework that is appropriate to drive analysis in multiple contexts. Thus, this thesis both pays tribute to Acker's (2006a, 2006b) inequality regimes approach and builds upon it.

The overarching empirical contribution of this thesis is the demonstration of a 'pay transparency' paradox, which emerged through developing the OSE framework and analysing the OSE within two university case studies. Universities Alpha and Beta are part of an industry with a persistent GPG and

[93] Acker's (2006b, p. 452) revelation of pay secrecy among Swedish bankers is an exception.

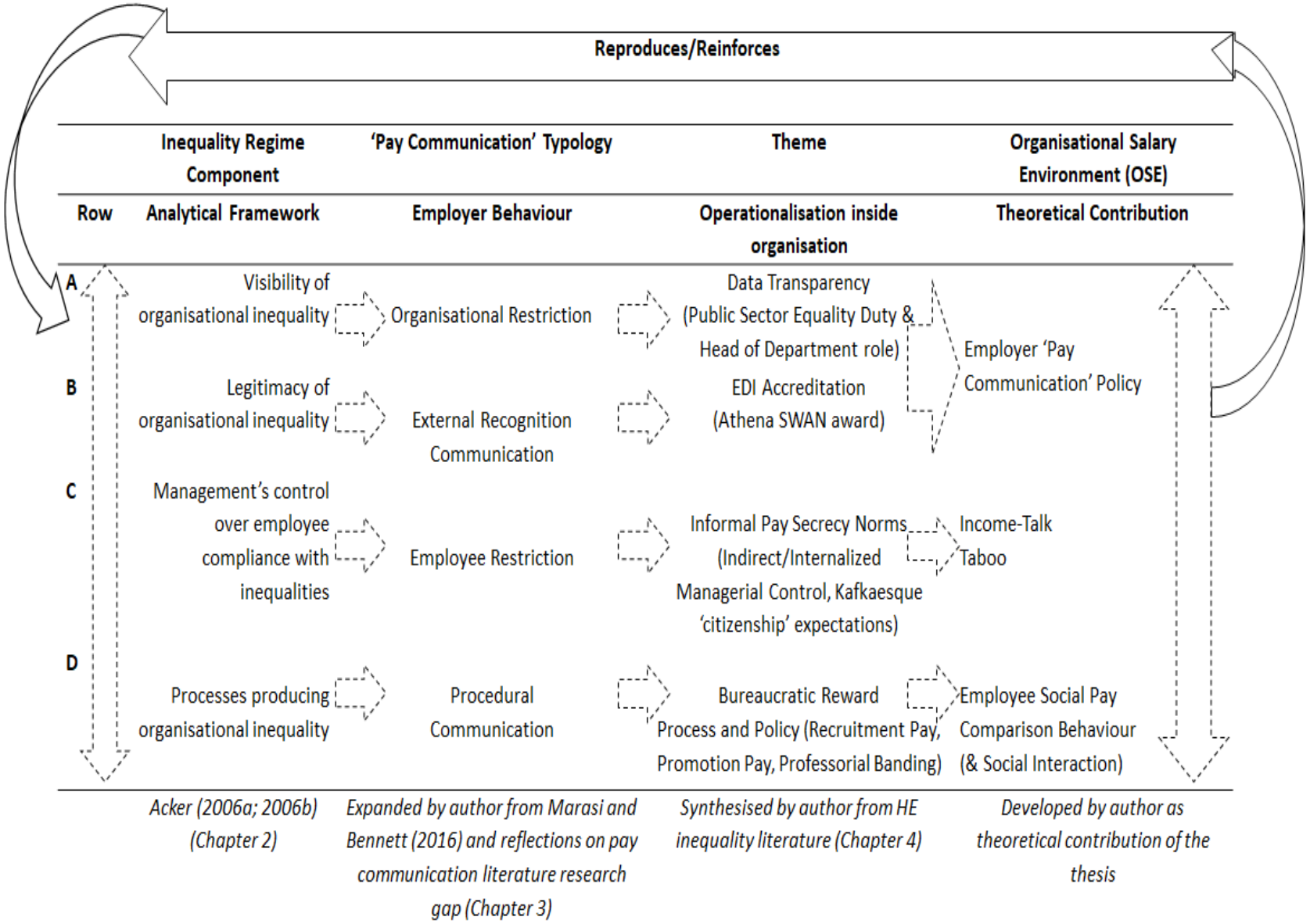
growing acknowledgement of a worse intersectional G/EPG, despite considerable pressure on universities to perform the pay 'transparency agenda' for a decade before the 2016/17 academic year. Paradoxically, the performance of the pay 'transparency agenda', through data publication, external recognition for equality progress, and reward and promotion policies, creates tools to silence questions about the transparency of pay, especially when concerns about fairness arise that criticise the function of the 'transparent' systems.

Therefore, this thesis yields conclusions of relevance to policy-making in the context of growing support for the pay 'transparency agenda' as a tool to narrow pay inequality in the UK and around the world. This thesis contributes and demonstrates the importance of the OSE to understanding the success or failure of such an agenda. Legislated transparency may struggle if it does not comprehensively account for the interlocking OSE components, including employer 'pay communication' policy, the income-talk taboo, and social pay comparison behaviour (and social interactions). Answers to the primary and three sub-research questions of this thesis expand upon these contributions.

9.2.1 Why hasn't the pay 'transparency agenda' closed the gender and gender-ethnic pay gap in UK higher education?

Answering the primary research question of this thesis has generated my key theoretical contribution. The result of developing the OSE theoretical concept throughout Chapters 2-4 and analysing the OSE inside Universities Alpha and Beta throughout Chapters 6-8 is shown in Figure 9-1. Whilst the OSE prioritises the employees' perspective, it is shaped by mutually constitutive employer and employee actions and social norms. Pay secrecy/transparency is shaped by employer 'pay communication' policies, which may be reinforced by the income-talk taboo, whilst social pay comparison by individual employees may create pockets of radical pay transparency between individuals. In answer to the primary research question, this framework provides a nuanced sociological contribution to the GPG literature. The silence of transparency, in respect of pay and related progression processes inside universities, partly explains the persistence of pay inequality because it obscures disparities and makes challenging disparities difficult, particularly when those challenges question existing hierarchical power relations that are embedded into workplace structures.

Figure 9-1: Result of Developing the Organisational Salary Environment Conceptualisation and Analysing the OSE of Universities Alpha and Beta



Row A of Figure 9-1 illustrates how transparency pressure encouraged employers to provide a veneer of greater visibility of inequality. To do so, employers lowered organisational restrictions on pay information by committing to generate greater data transparency by regularly publishing diversity and pay statistics, but these commitments were not always met. This commitment was linked to compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Additionally, heads of department (HoDs) could access and analyse their staff's pay and sometimes act to remedy inequality, although HoDs' interest and perceived power to do so, varied. Row B of Figure 9-1 demonstrates that university employers sought to increase the legitimacy of existing inequality by communicating their success of achieving external recognition for equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) practices through the Athena SWAN charter. However, this employer communication was, in practise, weak, with many staff having little understanding of the award or holding deeply cynical views of the 'tick-box exercise.' From this analysis of the visibility and legitimacy of inequality in the universities thus emerged the important function of employer 'pay communication' policy as the first component of the OSE.

The extent to which the promised visibility materialises demands a critical assessment. In both institutions, the actual visibility of inequality was low, due to the presentation of data that downplayed systemic responsibility for the revealed vertical segregation or failure to present the promised data. Alongside low actual visibility of inequality, Athena SWAN engagement portrayed high legitimacy of existing circumstances. Acker (2006b) argues that high visibility and low legitimacy of inequality inside organisations presents the greatest opportunity for reforming inequality regimes. In contrast, low visibility of inequality in practise and high levels of communication to suggest the legitimacy of existing arrangements explain the hostile environment to suggestions about reform that was observed in these universities. The arrow returning to the beginning of the figure indicates that employer 'pay communication' policy, in these institutions, reinforced low actual visibility of inequality and high alleged legitimacy of existing arrangements.

Row C of Figure 9-1 documents how management's control over employee compliance with inequalities was exercised by employee restriction that was exerted through informal communication to discourage employees from discussing their pay. This communication particularly occurred in discussion with HoDs, who were seen as organisational actors with authority, although some may avoid or be unclear about their responsibility for matters of pay. Informal pay secrecy norms emerged through these conversations. Indirect managerial control was exerted by some HoDs to reinforce the pay secrecy norm by discouraging academics from discussing pay openly.

Academics also expressed having internalised some managerial controls, such as the expectation of implicit trust in bureaucratic systems, the pay secrecy norm as an organising process, individualising responsibility for problems experienced rather than indicting structures, taking pleasure from work as a 'calling' and therefore exempt from 'minor' concerns such as pay, and fear of being seen as a troublemaker. A damaging example of internalised managerial control was in the unspoken norms of the 'helpfulness trap' (Padilla, 1994; Turner, 2002; Joseph and Hirshfield, 2011; Hirshfield and Joseph, 2012) inside 'Kafkaesque' systems of power and bureaucracy (Clegg *et al.*, 2016). Women and BAME academics and particularly BAME women academics felt a Catch-22 pressure to extensively support pastoral, administrative, and diversity work inside their departments but also to remain silent when this work was not rewarded by career progression. These emergent concepts reinforce the income-talk taboo social norm inside the organisation, even whilst some individuals violate the taboo. This social norm in turn reinforces management control over employee compliance with inequalities.

Row D of Figure 9-1 shows how processes reproduced organisational inequality as a result of 'transparent' procedural communication about bureaucratic reward process and policy. Despite public job adverts providing salary ranges for posts and published academic promotion criteria (including for professors at University Alpha), inconsistencies with recruitment starting pay, promotion pay rises and professorial pay were reported by academics, and slippage from published policy was acknowledged by remuneration policy shapers. Due to these experiences, individual academics engaged in social pay comparison with trusted friends, which created pockets of radical pay transparency. These recalled conversations help to account for the original empirical finding in this thesis that academics were more likely than not to report having engaged in social pay comparison (see 9.2.3). However, the knowledge obtained from social pay comparison was often met with enormous frustration when certain HoDs or HR professionals strongly defended the 'transparent' systems and individualised pay inequality problems, often blaming the victim. Whilst social pay comparison created some individual transparency, in contrast to the first two OSE components, it was not strong enough to generate reform of the hierarchical power structures that produced the organisational inequality, which was revealed.

9.2.2 To what effect has the pay 'transparency agenda' been performed in the two university case studies?

This first sub-research question was answered in Chapter 6. Analysis drew on Acker's (2006a, 2006b) inequality regime components: visibility and legitimacy of inequality. In terms of the multi-strategy, multi-layered methodology (Layder, 1993, 1998, 2006, 2013), analysis was at the level of the setting

inside Universities Alpha and Beta. Thematic policy analysis conducted to answer this question illustrated more formalised performance of the pay 'transparency agenda' in Alpha than Beta. This was surprising as both institutions had similarly slightly wider-than-average overall academic GPGs, while Alpha had a wider-than-average, worsening professorial GPG and Beta's was narrower-than-average and improving. However, when compared against each other in terms of regulative and voluntary compliance pressure on UK universities to perform the pay 'transparency agenda', a similarly concerning picture emerged. This picture was developed using the first two analytical OSE themes: data transparency and external recognition (Figure 6-7).

The PSED created regulative compliance pressure on both institutions to perform with respect to the data transparency theme. While both institutions published equality and diversity strategy documents that exhorted their commitment to transparent equality reporting, clear deficits in terms of the degree of visibility of inequality were highlighted by UCU representatives. In Alpha, the implementation of professorial banding, which could help to narrow pay inequality, led to visibility created by equal pay audits, but these audits became a tool to legitimate vertical segregation by gender within the professoriate. Although it was not raised by policy makers or the union, these audits reported an even worse picture for ethnicity, with no BAME staff in the top professorial band. In Beta, despite similar commitments to publishing equalities data, actual reporting was so delayed that the UCU committee launched a public campaign. When the data was released, it was in a format that made historical comparison or trend analysis impossible. This chapter also demonstrated the clear limitations of radical pay transparency, when afforded to only those with hierarchical privilege, HoDs, and in a format that did not make analysing gender or ethnic pay inequality straightforward. The revelation of hidden information about pay is not 'self-actuating,' especially when the transparency is not constructed to be useful to challenging inequality (Alexander, 2015).

The voluntary compliance pressure that emerged under the external recognition theme came from the Athena SWAN charter, which provides universities with public kudos. The voluntary award encouraged universities to publish analysis of gender-based inequality in their organisations, although very little specifically on pay, and to reflect on potential remedies. Financial pressure has further motivated universities to acquire this award, as several key funding bodies have begun to require Athena SWAN accreditation to be eligible to apply for their grants. Both universities held Athena SWAN awards, which arguably legitimate existing arrangements. The award signals that an organisation opposes gender-based inequality and is serious about reform. However, academics and

the union representatives expressed significant concern that this legitimacy was superficial. The 'right' narratives were written for the applications, but these were not matched with changes to practices. This may be further explained by the initial absence of pay analysis on the Athena SWAN checklist, even though a reasonable person would expect that pay equality would be part of such an assessment.

Answering this sub-research question has led to a critique of the current performance of the pay 'transparency agenda' in HE pay and progression, rather than a simple argument for *more* transparency. The analysis demonstrated a 'pay transparency' paradox – the silencing effect of performing transparency inside organisations. A cynical observer might think that this 'agenda' had been 'performed' to strategically 'minimise' rather than narrow pay inequality by presenting data that obscures more than it reveals. Whether that is by benign neglect or malicious design, this thesis cannot confirm, but to the extent that my research seeks structural explanations for persistent pay inequality, individual intent is irrelevant. Recalling that Acker (2006b, p. 443) defined organisational inequality as "systematic disparities between participants in power and control over goals, resources, and outcomes", how universities actually generate 'pay transparency' is paramount.

Union representatives in both institutions presented a clear impression that improving EDI data capacity was given low priority by senior management. In both institutions, a strong commitment to visibility of inequality was presented, but actual visibility of inequality was low. For example, the data presentation downplayed the problem of professorial vertical segregation in University Alpha, and the data presentation in University Beta was delayed and inconsistent. Alongside low practical visibility of inequality, engagement with Athena SWAN in both institutions presented high legitimacy of existing arrangements to non-expert university staff. Acker (2006b) argued that high visibility and low legitimacy of inequality inside organisations presents the greatest opportunity for reforming inequality regimes. By contrast, low genuine visibility of inequality and high communicated legitimacy of existing arrangements created a hostile environment to change in these two institutions. Similar institutionally self-defensive employer 'pay communication' policy was found in both universities. This served to silence inequality complaints where they challenged hierarchical power structures, such as the robust professorial banding process that had been established or pay setting processes that were questioned in the context of Athena SWAN. Whilst transparency was the stated intention of both institutions' employer 'pay communication' policy, the impression of high legitimacy of existing arrangements was emphasised, while the actual visibility of inequality was reduced by difficulties reporting consistent data. Answering this sub-research question showed

that institutionally self-reflexive transparency was necessary, but institutionally self-defensive transparency abounded.

9.2.3 Do academics in the two university case studies violate the 'income-talk' taboo, and if so, how might observed social pay comparison behaviour patterns be explained?

This second sub-research question was answered in Chapter 7. The chapter drew on Acker's (2006a, 2006b) inequality regime component: visibility of inequality within the HE sector using social pay comparison behaviour. In terms of the multi-strategy, multi-layered methodology (Layder, 1993, 1998, 2006, 2013), analysis was at the level of situated activity at the micro level in order to illustrate and analyse social pay comparison between UK-based academics. The analysis used primary data on the social pay comparison component of the OSE inside Universities Alpha and Beta. Social pay comparison violates the income-talk taboo (Fox, 2014). My original survey revisited Burchell and Yagil's (1997) early attempts to identify demographic and labour market factors associated with the propensity to engage in social pay comparison, using a web-based organisational survey that was distributed to all accessible academics at Universities Alpha and Beta in late 2016.

My survey's original empirical contribution was illustrating the hidden pay discussion behaviour of UK academics. More than half of respondents (54.7%) reported discussing their pay with colleagues. However, there was statistically significant variation in this behaviour. Fourteen independent variables were collected through this survey in order to translate Burchell and Yagil's (1997) analysis into the UK HE employment context. A binomial logistic regression model of social pay comparison behaviour was constructed using these variables. Within this model, only being a professor, having a doctorate, being a UCU member, and being a Liberal Democrat or Labour voter (relative to being a Conservative voter) were significantly and positively correlated with discussing pay. Hierarchical status was the most important factor in predicting pay discussion behaviour; professors were 3.6 times more likely to discuss their pay than their junior colleagues, ceteris paribus. These results support my earlier critiques of the often uncritical presentation of the income-talk taboo in academic literature (Chapter 3).

Some variation in compliance with the income-talk taboo might be expected. As anthropology tells us, social taboos do not have agency; individuals living under them have the "freedom to do otherwise" (Fischer and Ravizza, 1993, p. 6). Nevertheless, it is important to recall the critical admonishment of the income-talk taboo by Fox (2014, p. 290), in which she noted that "it is important to understand why people do these things." My survey demonstrates that, despite the so-

called income-talk taboo, academics are more likely than not to discuss pay with each other, at least in some contexts. This is even though 85.6% of the respondents agreed with the statement that 'British people have a strong aversion to talking about their salary and related matters.' What these results most strikingly illustrate is a stark difference between the pay discussion behaviour of junior and senior academics. The most influential factor explaining the propensity to discuss pay was having reached the professoriate, a point at which academics would feel the most secure in their academic career. Professors may feel able to risk having conversations about pay that violate the income-talk taboo. A tendency to discuss pay when the risk of doing so is perceived as lower because of having a more established career is also consistent with a broader interpretation that the tendency to discuss pay grows with the feeling of greater job security and the finding that union members (who would have access to union support) are more likely to discuss pay than non-union members. Equally, professors stand to gain the most potential reward from social pay comparison, in the context of their pay being above the academic pay scale and therefore higher and more individualised than the pay of other academics.

However, the most parsimonious explanation of this result is structural and founded on an understanding that pay and pay inequality results from power imbalances between institutional employment relations actors, including the government, trade unions, and employers. Trades unions are often essential actors in the efforts to narrow the GPG, as Conley et al. (2019) explore in the UK, Italian and Polish contexts. Acker's (1989) analysis of comparable worth efforts in the US state of Oregon demonstrated the role of trade unions in the context of horizontal occupational segregation. Considering this union perspective, non-professors are covered by sectoral collective bargaining, which is linked to the national Framework Agreement (JNCHES 2004); the UCU (2016a) negotiates a pay uplift every year on their behalf. Professorial pay is not covered by these sectoral collective negotiations[94], and the equal pay risks of secretive professorial pay has received judicial criticism (Lewis, 2011). Therefore, it may simply be that professors are more likely to have pay conversations with colleagues because there is little transparency of their pay. Without a pay scale, there is no other way for professors to learn what their colleagues earn. A key distinction, however, is that University Alpha had established institutional professorial pay banding prior to 2016/17, and University Beta had not. Nevertheless, professorial pay discussion behaviour was not statistically different between the two institutions. Importantly, these findings may call into question the extent

[94] Universities Alpha and Beta voluntarily gave professors pay rises in line with the annual uplift.

of the transparency that has been produced by the institution-managed professorial banding procedures at Alpha.

Given the gender and ethnicity-based intersectional focus of this thesis, it was somewhat surprising that pay discussion behaviour was not statistically different between men and women or BAME and white academics. However, a growing likelihood to discuss pay as one becomes more secure in one's job could help to explain some of the persistent inequality in terms of pay and vertical segregation faced by women academics, particularly BAME women, if talking about pay and related matters, especially promotion, with colleagues helped academics to improve their circumstances. To build a more nuanced picture of the OSE in these institutions, my survey findings were supplemented by semi-structured interviews with employment relations actors from the two case study universities in order to answer the remaining sub-research question.

9.2.4 How does the pay 'transparency agenda' within UK universities influence awareness of pay (and related progression) inequality by academics, particularly women and BAME academics?

Seeking to scrutinise further the 'pay transparency' paradox that was unveiled by answering the first sub-research question at the level of the setting, the final sub-research question was answered in Chapter 8 at the level of the self. The chapter drew on Acker's (2006a, 2006b) inequality regime components: management control and processes that produce inequality. In terms of the multi-strategy, multi-layered methodology (Layder, 1993, 1998, 2006, 2013), this analysis was conducted at the level of the self and with a focus on the experiences and interactions of academics in Universities Alpha and Beta. This research question was explored through the remaining two analytical framework themes of this thesis: informal pay secrecy norms and bureaucratic reward process and policy (Figure 8-1). The pay 'transparency agenda' within these two universities did not effectively influence awareness of pay (and related progression) inequality by academics due to the 'pay transparency' paradox.

Through the analysis aligned with the first theme, informal pay secrecy norms, an illustration emerged of the mutually constitutive relationship between managerial controls and the societal income-talk taboo. Forms of managerial controls included indirect managerial control, internalised managerial control, and the 'helpfulness trap', which created barriers to progression especially for BAME and female academics. These forms of control were reinforced by the income-talk taboo that discourages open discussion of pay and progression. The income-talk taboo can be seen to amplify the strength of the informal discouragement from discussing pay and progression concerns that were experienced by academic staff in conversations with HoDs and the controls internalised by the

academic staff. Conversely, the norm may be pressuring HoDs to send these informal cues in the first place, in order to prevent what may feel like awkward conversations, particularly given the sometimes unclear ability of HoDs to remedy problems when pay outcomes diverge from transparent pay systems.

Through the second theme, an illustration emerged of how social pay comparison and other social interactions, revealed to staff how 'transparent' bureaucracy reproduces inequality at work, but did not readily lead to remedies of the problems that were revealed. The discussions of recruitment pay offers exposed details about the pay setting process, which contradicted its presentation as 'transparent.' Universities were shown to prioritise maintaining their advantage over applicants in respect of pay information and market data. Social pay comparison also revealed instances of men hired after women in the same role but at higher pay and unexplained shifts in the advertised pay range of similar roles in a short span of time. Finally, the power of HR and HoDs to increase pay offers (or not) if they chose was revealed, sometimes leaving new hires at the mercy of HoDs who may, or may not, choose to champion them, with little scrutiny of those decisions. Despite a common understanding that there were pay ranges for different academic roles, remuneration policy shapers from both institutions distanced promotion from the remuneration-setting process. Opacity and greyness around pay rises associated with promotion emerged prominently, particularly for promotion from senior lecture to reader. Promotion was often presented in both universities as a solution to acknowledged previous pay unfairness. This individualises problems and leaves staff disadvantaged in pension terms, exemplifying the cumulative and enduring impact of pay discrimination, which Justice Ginsburg raised in her dissenting opinion in *Ledbetter v Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co, Inc.* (2007). Even though University Alpha had professorial pay banding and Beta did not, a consistent thread ran through their professorial pay setting practices, which yet again revealed a strong inclination by employers to publicly defend their systems and individualise problems faced by professors, even if remedies were being applied behind closed doors in Beta.

Reinforcing the setting level findings from the first sub-research question (Section 9.2.2), consideration of this final question strengthened an understanding of the 'pay transparency' paradox from the individual self level perspective. The silencing effect of transparency was experienced by individual academics through indirect and internalised managerial control. Women and BAME academics, and especially BAME women academics experienced the double-bind of being aware of the 'helpfulness trap' barrier to promotion, whilst also aware that the 'Kafkaesque' promotions process meant that there was little they could do to escape. These forms of managerial

control were strengthened by a mutually constitutive relationship with the income-talk taboo. Additionally, staff concerns about the 'transparent' bureaucratic reward process and policy led to revelations of inconsistencies in starting pay and promotion pay rises through social pay comparison. Professorial pay banding, or lack thereof, led to social interactions between professors and senior management and HoDs with HR that revealed institutional self-defensiveness, leading to victim-blaming or problem solving behind closed doors. Thus, while employee social pay comparison worked against the first two components of the OSE to create pockets of transparency, it was not strong enough to shift the processes producing the organisational inequality, which was revealed.[95]

9.3 Methodological Contribution

The primary methodological contribution of this thesis has been to demonstrate the value of using a multi-layered, multi-strategy approach to generate a novel explanation for GPGs by interrogating accepted practices and settled social norms. While headline pay inequality figures can be reported over time and decomposition can be employed to explain them (Chapter 2), pure quantitative analysis lacks the sociological perspective that accounts for social interaction and structural power explanations of the reconstruction of inequality, despite some accompanying progress. Additionally, quantitative data to measure the three OSE components that emerged from the analysis in this thesis: employer 'pay communication' policy, the income-talk taboo, and employee social pay comparison behaviour (and social interaction) is limited. It was not available in the most reliable academic pay dataset, HESA (Chapter 5). Multi-layered, multi-strategy analysis of why efforts to narrow the GPG and the G/EPG have been difficult has revealed a paradox that 'pay transparency' performance has created justification to silence questions of inequality.

This revelation is consistent with Amery et al.'s (2019) argument that contextual history and the feudal-like hierarchical structure of UK universities account for the continued reproduction of gender and ethnic-based inequality. Multi-layered, multi-method analysis using Acker's (2006a, 2006b) inequality regime approach helps to explain the reproduction of this inequality. Hence, it is unsurprising that Amery et al. (2019) found that following the second wave of mandatory GPG reporting by universities, neither the VC's gender, the Athena SWAN status, nor the proportion of women within governance structures had a statistically significant impact on institutional GPGs or

[95] Few positive first-hand examples of successful starting salary or promotion negotiation came through in these interviews, beyond the Alpha white female professor whose HoD gave her higher pay without having to negotiate, jokingly advising her to get an agent and the HoD who looked at salaries from an equality perspective and argued for uplifts (Chapter 8). The overwhelming impression was of frustration and inconsistency; this may stem from respondent bias. Academics who experienced comfortable negotiations and pay rises may have been less drawn by my topic and thus less likely to engage with my research.

the proportion of women in their top pay quartile (Amery *et al.*, 2019). Transparency that protects hierarchical power structures does not resolve organisational inequality.

9.4 Limitations

However, limitations to both secondary and primary analysis should be acknowledged. Access to HESA data enabled sector-wide descriptive analysis in Chapter 4 and 6. However, HESA usage terms meant that I could not analyse Universities Alpha and Beta's pay separately in Chapter 6, despite their data being contained in the dataset. Therefore, analysis of pay inequality inside my case studies could only use the THE's public analysis of HESA data, and still with only a general characterisation of the professorial GPG trends, to preserve institutional anonymity. This sufficiently revealed the 'typical' nature of the academic GPG inside both institutions. However, original analysis of the HESA data may have enabled more finely grained comparison between the two, with controls as discussed in Chapter 2. This may have been especially interesting given the sharp difference in their aggregate professorial GPGs.

Generalisability of my original survey in Chapter 7 is limited by logistical barriers to conducting random sampling. In order to conduct random sampling of a population, a complete listing of that population is needed (Bourque and Fielder, 2003). However, a public listing of all UK academics, including their electronic addresses, does not exist. A-Mail Academic, a UK-based marketing company, sells a listing of academics for web-based surveys (Housewright, Schonfeld and Wulfson, 2013), but they do not contract with independent researchers. Previous teams of researchers have manually collected these details from departmental directories of all UK university public websites (Abreu *et al.*, 2009; Lawson, Kitson and Hughes, 2016). However, they have not made their collated directory public or easily updateable. Re-creation of this considerable manual task across the whole UK without a supporting team would have made poor use of my capacity as an individual researcher. Attempts to scrape email addresses with macros proved untenable, due partly to inconsistent formatting of online departmental directories within and across universities. Therefore, to balance between usefulness and feasibility, I opted to employ the manual email directory construction method of previous researchers, whilst limiting the scope of my survey to my two case study organisations.

Finally, confidentiality and anonymity limits detail in some analysis of my interview transcripts. There are some facets of the institutional structure and history of the case studies that cannot be disclosed, although they helped to inform the case study selection and could strengthen the analysis

of the pay 'transparency agenda' performance. Disclosure would identify the institutions, each of which was assured of institutional confidentiality, and could compromise participant anonymity. I could also not quote directly from policy documents, as these could easily be found online using a search engine. As with any qualitative research endeavour, intellectual intrigue and ethics must be balanced.

9.5 Post-2016/17 Developments

My fieldwork for this thesis was concentrated during the 2016/17 academic year. Since then, several key developments have emerged that provide additional context for framing the policy implications of this thesis and recommended directions for future research. First, three years of mandatory GPG reporting deadlines have now passed since my fieldwork was conducted, creating further opportunity to assess the impact of the pay 'transparency agenda' pressure inside UK HE. Secondly, concern about the ethnic-based pay inequality in HE has continued to grow. Finally, active promotion of secrecy within HE employment relationships has emerged as problematic and widespread through recent reporting on the use of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) in settlement agreements.

First, it has been three years since mandatory GPG reporting began. In the lead up to my 2016/17 fieldwork period, the UK was in the process of putting in place mandatory GPG reporting regulations for all large employers, including universities (Miller and Swinson, 2012; HM Parliament, 2017b). This timing meant this thesis could not assess the impact of these reports, although universities were aware of the imminent policy.[96] The reputational dangers of revealing pay inequality without full institutional consideration of the problems, and their remedies, were made evident by the prominent equal pay complaint brought by the BBC journalist Carrie Gracie, subsequent to the BBC's transparency of top-earner pay during the 2017/18 academic year (BBC News, 2018; Weaver, 2018). In an interview for the Fawcett Society (2018), Gracie observed that "the fight for equal pay often pits a lone woman against a very powerful employer…Many women in other workplaces have since told me about their feelings of loneliness and helplessness in confronting pay discrimination."

Following the first round of reporting in 2018, AdvanceHE analysed narratives by English universities that accompanied their GPG figures. Of universities that voluntarily provided narratives, 122 of the 132 that were required to report data, vertical occupational segregation was the most common explanation of their GPG (Dawkins, 2018). However, the most commonly proposed remedies

[96] See Appendix K for discussion of forthcoming analysis of GPG reporting.

pertained to flexible working, followed closely by Aurora leadership training, which is a programme to help academic and professional services women develop their leadership skills (Dawkins and Aldercotte, 2018). Developing these women-focused programmes suggests that if only women knew how to lead, vertical segregation would diminish. This raises similar victim-blaming concerns to those highlighted by the literature that attributes some of the GPG to women's poor or reluctant pay negotiation efforts (Babcock, Engberg and Greenbaum, 2005; Babcock and Laschever, 2009). The focus is on fixing women—their negotiation skills, their leadership styles—rather than interrogating why organisational systems are not paying or promoting women equally to men.

Following the second mandatory GPG reporting deadline in the spring of 2019, the Times Higher Education (THE) reported on the persistence of the GPG within UK universities. The publication noted that HE's mean GPG fell only from 15.9 to 15.1%, while the median GPG rose from 14 to 14.8% from the first to the second reporting period (Pells, 2019). Median GPGs are less skewed by extreme high or low pay, so this suggests that the gap between typical academic men and women widened (Chapter 2). The trend was linked to a worsening gap in 46 universities, more than 20% of the 228 institutions that reported GPG data. Helen Carr, UCU Head of Equality, said in an interview with Pells (2019):

> Simply reporting on the gap is not enough. The terribly slow pace of change will only be sped up when universities publish action plans that set out how and when they will reduce the gap…For years we have heard enlightened rhetoric in higher education about the issue of unfair pay for women. What we really need are clear commitments on how institutions will reduce the gap and when.

Not only are action plans required but they must also be followed with relevant action.[97] The reporting mandate was lifted for the spring 2020 deadline due to the Coronavirus crisis, although employers were still allowed to report (Government Equalities Office, 2020). For instance, by 4 July 2020, all but one Russell Group university had reported voluntarily (Gov.uk, 2020). Queen Mary University of London had not reported, although it had publicly promised to report (Parr, 2020).

Secondly, concern about the ethnicity pay gap (EPG) within HE has grown. The UCU's 2019/20 pay equality claim included the EPG for the first time. The UCU had called for a national framework to address the GPG, and equal pay audits, disaggregating by gender, race and disability status, for several years prior (University and College Union, 2015b). The 2019/20 claim newly demanded that

[97] The THE reported that Falmouth University achieved largest narrowing of their GPG from the first to second reporting deadline, followed by Queen Mary University of London. See Appendix L for an explanation of why this may not indicate reform of hierarchical power structures creating equality.

employers “work on closing the ethnic pay gap, taking account of the ways in which intersectionality affects pay and grading” (University and College Union, 2019). Rollock’s (2019) ground-breaking investigation into the experiences of most of the UK’s black female professors for the UCU revealed their experiences of being paid less than white comparators. The BBC also published articles about the academic EPG and G/EPG, using pay data from 22 of the UK’s 24 Russell Group universities (Croxford, 2018, 2019). Apart from revealing the scale of ethnic pay inequality, one article also provided telling illustrations of how universities implicitly and directly silence questions of the consistent functioning of the ‘transparent’ pay scale (Croxford, 2019). The experiences echoed many from this thesis, particularly the tendency to shut down inequality concerns with the expectation that the individual should resolve the institution’s wrong.

One account by Croxford (2019) was strikingly similar to the white female academic who saw her same job title advertised a year after joining University Alpha but with a pay range starting at several thousand more than her salary (Chapter 8). A BAME female “was on a grade just below professor when she discovered she was being paid about £8,000 less than white male lecturers on lower grades in the same department” (Croxford, 2019). The woman achieved this glimpse of radical pay transparency from costings reports for a group funding bid, but she did not feel able to query the situation. She expressed fear of becoming viewed as a troublemaker if she voiced her concerns. Individualising her problem, she worried that it reflected her weak achievements. Another BAME woman described by Croxford (2019) learned of her inequality while having coffee with three white colleagues. All four had completed their PhDs about the same time and accrued similar levels of teaching experience, yet the BAME woman was paid much less. She spoke to her HoD, who offered to raise her pay but not enough to remedy the gap. Her HoD cautioned her not to press for more to avoid being “seen as an angry black woman” (Croxford, 2019) and—as happened to a white woman academic in Chapter 8—her HoD advised her to seek remedy for the acknowledged years of underpayment by applying for promotion. Promotion was also presented as a resolution for a BAME woman with six years of university teaching experience, according to Croxford (2019). She overheard junior colleagues that had recently completed their PhDs discussing their pay, which was thousands more than hers. Her enquiries were similarly met with individualising blame, asserting that she had failed to negotiate and that she should apply for a small performance bonus or promotion to remedy her acknowledged pay inequality. A BAME male reported a similar experience. When he queried the issue, he was told that if he was unhappy, to “go elsewhere” (Croxford, 2019). Even the University and College Employer’s Association (UCEA) released intersectional pay analysis in November 2018, motivated by the expected future EPG reporting regulations. The report found

that black men and women experienced a significant pay penalty relative to white men and women, which was strongly explained by vertical segregation. The picture was more mixed for Asian staff, so the authors recommended that universities should include at least broad ethnicity categories in future pay analyses (Hopkins and Salvestrini, 2018).

Finally, the active promotion of secrecy within HE employment relationships has emerged as problematic and widespread in the context of NDAs in university settlement agreements. In April of 2019, the THE reported the results of an FOI request about NDA use. The request revealed that the 98 responding UK universities issued nearly 11,000 NDAs from 2014/15 through most of 2018/19. The FOI responses did not give any explanation of the context of the NDAs, but the figures raised concern that the legal clauses can cover up bullying and harassment (Stokel-Walker, 2019). Prominent campaigner against sexual harassment in HE, Dr Emma Chapman argued in an interview with Stokel-Walker (2019) that "this level of NDA use shows how universities have long prioritised reputation management above the safety and well-being of their students and staff."

9.6 Policy Implications and Impact

The primary implication of this thesis for both government and employer policy is that pay transparency is not 'self-actuating' (Alexander, 2015). To be a tool to help narrow pay inequality, pay transparency must reveal pay inequality where it exists *and possess the capacity to generate reform*. Where transparency becomes an exercise to validate the status quo, rather than to shift the imbalance of power between employers and employees, it will struggle to perform. Performing pay transparency successfully requires organisational self-criticality and vulnerability by employers, or, barring that, external scrutiny to a degree that it matters to employers. Although legislative reform and pay setting principles were not the focus of my empirical analysis on pay transparency, the findings from my case studies do raise important implications for both. Therefore, this section will first discuss the nuanced lessons for how the UK's pay 'transparency agenda' may be improved to better promote gender pay equality. Secondly, the challenges that this thesis presents to settled pay setting systems, both nationally and within the HE sector, will be explored. Finally, avenues that have been strategised to generate impact from the implications of this thesis with relevant actors will be briefly summarised.

The revealed complexity of pay transparency in this thesis provides nuanced lessons for how the UK's pay 'transparency agenda' may be improved to better promote gender pay equality. This thesis has demonstrated practical shortcomings in the performance of pay transparency inside two publicly funded organisations that operate within a sector that had already experienced a decade of

multi-layered forces pressing for greater pay transparency (Chapter 4). Most notably, this thesis elucidated a pay 'transparency paradox' inside the university case studies (Chapter 6 & 8). Although transparent pay and related progression policies are presented, academic staff do not always experience these policies as consistent, particularly when it comes to initial pay setting and promotion decisions. In many instances, when women who raised concerns that their treatment contrasted with the transparent systems, their interventions were met by those holding organisational power with disbelief or shock. At worst, they felt that they experienced retribution, such as when they questioned their workload allocations. At best, their problems were acknowledged individually, and the women were encouraged to resolve them themselves, for instance, by seeking promotion. The presentation of a transparent system was used to defend against criticisms of that system when they arose (Chapter 8).

The messiness of the lived experience of pay transparency (or secrecy) inside these universities provides support for the comprehensive approach to pay transparency that was advised by the European Commission (2014a) in their 2014 *Commission Recommendation on strengthening the principle of equal pay between men and women through transparency*, an approach that the UK's GPG reporting regulations only begin to address. In an April 2019 parliamentary debate on the GPG, Victoria Atkins MP, the Minister for Women, acknowledged that the UK's regulations were only an initial monitoring step and must be followed up by further actions by both employers and government (Brown 2019). Following a review of case-study research into company policies and practices that were intended to narrow the GPG, Brown (2019) argued for the importance of a multi-pronged strategy to engage both formal and informal tactics.

Several European Union (EU) nations had begun to legislate to promote pay transparency by protecting employees' rights to discuss their pay (Bierman and Gely, 2004; Colella *et al.*, 2007) or by mandating employers to report company GPGs, throughout the early 2000s (Chapter 1). Scandinavian countries, including Norway, Sweden, and Finland, also have an established culture of radical pay transparency due to their publicly accessible databases of all individual's tax returns (Chapter 3). These databases were made even more accessible when they were placed online in recent years, although this has been followed by some restrictions to access (Fernandez, 2010; Brancaccio, 2012; Swift, 2012; Kulow, 2013; Marcal, 2017). Kulow (2013) has made a promising observation that Norway's GPG has narrowed since the nation made individual level pay information publicly available online in the early 2000s; unfortunately, the basis for her claim lacked peer-reviewed analysis. No systematic testing of the relationship between these natural experiments in

radical pay transparency and national GPGs could be identified. Furthermore, although Scandinavian nations are often painted as models in terms of gender equality (World Economic Forum, 2019), significant research has demonstrated that their progress remains variable (Seierstad and Healy, 2012; Grönlund, Halldén and Magnusson, 2017). That even nations with levels of pay transparency significantly beyond what has been achieved in the UK continue to struggle with inequality concerns, underscores the complexity of the problem.

In 2014, the European Commission (2014a) issued the *Commission Recommendation on strengthening the principle of equal pay between men and women through transparency.* The Recommendation encouraged member states to better leverage pay transparency along four dimensions as part of a comprehensive strategy to narrow the GPG. These dimensions included (i) the right of individual employees to request information about pay that is disaggregated by gender and work of equal value; (ii) a duty on employers to report the average pay of men and women by job category; (iii) a duty on employers to conduct equal pay audits, and (iv) a measure to include equal pay, including equal pay audits, in collective bargaining (Chapter 1). Veldman and Timmer's (2017) analysis for the European Commission found that by September 2016, implementation of these four dimensions was limited for most member states. The UK's protection of the right to discuss pay was presented as partial fulfilment of the individual right of employees to request information about pay. However, the UK also revoked the statutory equal pay questionnaire, which had previously enabled women to do precisely as the 2014 Recommendation advised (Trades Union Congress, 2015b). The then-planned GPG reporting regulations were also discussed by Veldman and Timmer (2017) as an expected future implementation of the recommended duty on employers to report on pay. Slow uptake of the Recommendation left the door open for an EU directive to require member states to promote pay transparency through binding measures and enforcement. The dismally low employer uptake of the UK's Think, Act, Report measure to encourage GPG reporting (Government Equalities Office, 2016a) similarly illustrated the limitation of voluntary equality measures to drive employer engagement (Chapter 3). Seierstad et al. (2020) found comparable limitations to voluntary compliance with women on corporate board quotas in Norway. Compliance was high for companies that were bound by the mandate with significant sanctions for non-compliance, but there was little voluntary compliance amongst other companies. Indeed, some companies even changed their legal status in a seeming bid to avoid having to comply with the quota, which raises important lessons for enforcement design. Therefore, it will be important to monitor the strength with which enforcement is ultimately applied to companies through transposed national legislation of the EU's forthcoming pay transparency directive. This directive

may also contain measures to increase the transparency of pay systems and strengthen public awareness of key rights and legal concepts. Feedback on the proposal for such a directive was elicited during January-February 2020, and a public consultation was held from March-May 2020. The directive is expected to be adopted by the end of 2020 (European Commission, 2020).

In the longer term, the UK should more fully adopt the Commission's Recommendation or transpose the future EU directive on pay transparency into domestic law. However, the UK's EU withdrawal completion may complicate this process (Boffey and Rankin, 2020). Fuller adoption of a more comprehensive pay 'transparency agenda' would require the government to recognise that the individualised UK equalities legal framework is overly reliant on employees having to actively seek protection from employment discrimination. This does not substantially produce organisational change; it often only secures limited remedy for a few individuals (Dickens, 2000). Employers like University Alpha and Beta were reluctant to acknowledge informal complaints as evidence of any sort of systemic problem. Those universities function within the same industry that has been sharply criticised for its over-zealous imposition of NDAs in out-of-court settlements (Stokel-Walker, 2019). In the rare instances where an employee manages a successful anti-discrimination claim against their employer, one can hardly expect more transparent receptiveness, except perhaps where required by law. However, getting a successful employment tribunal judgement requires employees to surmount significant challenges to obtain multiple types of workplace information (Alexander, 2015), to secure sufficient resources to bring a claim, and—to some degree—to be lucky. Professor Schafer (2011) made clear the extent of the effort it took to bring her partially successful claim against Royal Holloway; this was only made possible by substantial legal support from the UCU, who were seeking a test case to challenge professorial pay secrecy (Chapter 4). As demonstrated in this thesis, the intractability of organisational inequality regimes in the face of significant pay transparency exercises strengthens calls to move beyond individual rights-based anti-discrimination protection. As concluded by the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee (2019, p. 3) in a recent inquiry report:

> The individual approach to enforcement of the Equality Act 2010, and its predecessors going back to the 1960s and 70s, is not fit for purpose…We want to see a model than can act as a sustainable deterrent to achieve system-wide change that tackles institutional and systemic discrimination.

The report explains that such a model would require making explicit obligations on employers, such as GPG reporting, more directly enforceable and empowering the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to engage in bolder enforcement action, within the limitations of its currently

reduced budget. The report also recommends that the EHRC should publicly report on its enforcement action to serve as an amplified deterrent to bad behaviour by employers (House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, 2019).

In the medium term, the employer practice of basing recruitment pay offers on applicants' salary history ought to be banned. A 2018 YouGov survey commissioned by the Young Women's Trust indicated that nearly half of UK employers ask job applicants for their salary history (Clarke, 2018). Policy shapers at both case studies readily acknowledged the use of this practice. An Alpha policy shaper openly explained that salary history may be used to justify an increased pay offer to what might have been offered otherwise, but only if the candidate had revealed their salary history before negotiations began (Chapter 8). Recruitment pay negotiations present a unique moment in which the potential employee's power vis-à-vis the potential employer is at its greatest. Basing recruitment pay offers on salary history allows employers to turn prior pay discrimination into market justification to pay women and minorities less (Monopoli, 2016). The practice is rapidly attracting condemnation by US equality advocates; as a result, legislation that bans this practice for at least some employers has been enacted in 17 states, along with Washington, DC and Puerto Rico, as of 28 February 2020 (Herzfeld, 2019; HR Dive, 2020). The ban has begun to attract support in the UK, including from the Young Women's Trust (Clarke, 2018).

This thesis also raises immediate practical implications for the most prominent policy that is currently driving the pay 'transparency agenda' in the UK, mandatory GPG reporting regulations. These regulations address only one of the four dimensions of the European Commission's recommendations for pay transparency. An inquiry by the House of Commons' Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee's (2018), after the first annual GPG reporting deadline, identified a range of tactics that companies had taken to remedy their pay gap, but the Committee was reluctant to call on government to mandate a particular mix of measures. The report left open the possibility that more direct government intervention could be required in the future, but initially argued:

> Organisations cannot rely on excuses about societal attitudes and trends to avoid examining their own contribution, conscious or otherwise, to their gender pay gaps and the effectiveness of their measures to address them. They must take responsibility for closing these gaps by taking effective action. (House of Commons Business Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee, 2018, p. 28)

However, Brown (2019, p. 145) observed that the House of Commons' Women and Equalities Committee has gone further, criticising "the narrow scope and lack of enforcement of the new

regulations." Weak enforcement of these regulations presents a particular concern given the individualised nature of anti-discrimination law (Dickens, 2000). Employees are already in a weaker position than their employer when seeking information about pay in their company. Early assessment of the reporting regulations may validate concerns about their strength. Following the second year of reporting, Amery et al. (2019) found that neither Athena SWAN status nor presence of women in senior management roles were significantly related to a narrowed GPG or reduced vertical segregation. If 'pay transparency' performance protects hierarchical power structures, it cannot resolve organisational inequality. Brown (2019) also reported that of the 100 largest companies who published narratives to accompany their 2019 GPG reporting, only four proposed an action to review company policies. Concerning the need for transparency to substantively challenge existing hierarchical power structures, this thesis strengthens advocacy for several reforms to the mandatory GPG reporting regulations.

The UK government ought to reduce the employer reporting threshold from 250 employees to 50. The current threshold only covers about half the workforce (Government Equalities Office, 2016b). As discussed previously, research indicates that voluntary spill over equalities compliance by employers who are not bound by mandates, cannot be relied upon (Seierstad *et al.*, 2020). Reducing the reporting mandate threshold would also align with European Commission recommendations for employer GPG reporting (House of Commons Business Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee, 2018).

These employers also ought to be required to publish narratives alongside their data in order to provide evidence-based explanations and propose actions to address key causes of pay gaps, as argued by the Trades Union Congress in their 2015 submission to the Government Equalities Office consultation on these regulations (Trades Union Congress, 2015b). The Labour Party's shadow Minister for Women and Equalities, Dawn Butler MP, renewed this call in an April 2019 parliamentary debate on the GPG (Brown 2019). Narratives may be of limited value if employees cannot understand them, and so these narratives must be written in a way that is accessible for general audiences, with varying degrees of numeracy. These narratives would also provide a written record to which employees or the local union could hold employers accountable if the actions did not substantively materialise. The narratives, along with the annual nature of the reporting requirement, may generate scope for further mandates to require either improvement over time or targets below which to keep the reported gaps.

The UK government also ought to produce and maintain a public listing of the employers that are required to report their GPG. This seems to be an obvious action to enable public scrutiny of compliance, particularly given that the government significantly underestimated the reporting mandate prior to the first reporting deadline. The government initially estimated that about 8,000 employers would have to report, which increased to about 9,000 shortly before the first deadline. The final figure was 10,528. Despite entreaties by the House of Commons Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy Committee (2018), this listing has not materialised.

As an additional lever to encourage substantive compliance, the government ought to introduce a clear threat of sanctions, not only for failure to report but also for inaccuracy. Tax filings with erroneous figures may accrue at least a financial penalty, yet the accuracy of GPG reporting seems to be under relatively weak scrutiny as long as something is submitted by the deadline. A recent report by the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee (2019) found that the EHRC's enforcement of the existing mandate preceded quickly because it was binary; companies reported or they did not. A report by the House of Commons Business Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee (2018) expressed concern that the EHRC's ability to impose fines for either non-compliance or inaccurate reporting is legally insecure and cumbersome. Healy and Ahamed's (2019) analysis of the persistent GPG in the UK finance sector suggested that mandatory regulations requiring GPG reporting without clear financial sanctions for non-compliance are unlikely to generate significant narrowing of the GPG. Without empowering and resourcing the EHRC to conduct analysis, not only of reporting but of the validity of reporting, employers will remain under limited pressure to shift structural inequality.[98]

Lastly, the UK government ought to continue what it has slowly begun, by introducing a requirement to also report the EPG to create more comprehensive transparency of pay inequality (Department for Business Energy & Industrial Strategy, 2018). In recognition of the intersectional nature of pay inequality, this reporting should ideally intersect with gender, at least using broad ethnic categories (Hopkins and Salvestrini, 2018). The UK government proposed enacting mandatory EPG reporting, which could be somewhat analogous to GPG reporting. However, the shape of these requirements and whether they may require intersectional calculations remains unknown. A public consultation on the proposed requirement ran from October 2018 to January 2019. By 13 June 2020, the

[98] For example, Queen Mary University of London asserted in their 2019 filing that their 2018 filing had been wrong and the method was corrected. They did not clearly explain the correction, provide revised figures for their 2018 filing using their 2019 method, or face any apparent repercussions from the EHRC (Queen Mary University of London, 2019).

government had not responded (Department for Business Energy & Industrial Strategy, 2018; Gov.uk, 2019).

The revealed complexity of pay transparency in this thesis also presents challenges to settled pay setting systems and principles, both nationally and within the HE sector, with a view to what may be more conducive to reducing gender and gender/ethnic pay equality. The previous discussion of implications for the UK's pay 'transparency agenda' has suggested shorter and longer-term strategies to reform pay transparency practices to combat pay inequality more effectively. The following section now proposes the practical changes to wage setting systems and principles that the findings of this thesis infers.

On the national level, this thesis strengthens the case for rolling back anti-union legislation to enable stronger unionisation and collective bargaining of wage setting systems. Although this research has been conducted inside a sector with strong unionisation by UK standards, it is, nevertheless, against a backdrop of declining unionisation across the nation. The decline of trade unions and sectoral collective bargaining in the UK has been driven in part by harsh anti-union legislation, and this decline partly accounts for the rise in individualised employment litigation (Deakin *et al.*, 2015), as well as allowing for more individualised pay systems without the level of union-pushback that has been discussed in the HE sector against the use of market-supplements (Chapter 6). The most recent legislative attack on trade unions came through the Trade Unions Act (TUA) 2016, which, amongst other things, placed onerous requirements on industrial action ballots that make it significantly harder for unions to wield their strongest tool of last resort in disputes:

> The combined effect of the measures is to make the TUA probably the most significant trade union legislation since the Employment Act 1980, representing a sudden acceleration in the incremental legislative controls subsequently introduced by Conservative governments. (Ford and Novitz, 2016, p. 277)

The decline of unions is concerning because they are also integral actors with the potential motivation and power to use the transparency of GPG reporting as leverage for reform inside organisations. To repeat Alexander's (2015) point, pay transparency is not 'self-actuating.' With currently weak enforcement of the regulations, great responsibility rests on unions to use the regulations to press for change where it is needed (Conley and Torbus, 2019). It is perhaps against this context of declining trade union power in the UK that the UCU has continued to countenance a Framework Agreement that contains flaws, which may be presenting significant barriers to eliminating the GPG, as will be explored below.

Within the HE sector, this thesis presents a challenge to the sector's self-presentation as one that embodies pay transparency. Although both case study universities aligned the pay of their academic staff (excluding professors) with the Framework Agreement-derived sectoral pay spine, deviations emerged from that pay scale through pay grade drift that was enabled in part by market and retention supplements. Some apparent starting pay negotiation discrepancies also became apparent. A key structural problem emerged with respect to professorial pay, which is outside of the sectoral collective bargaining that led to the present Framework Agreement (Chapter 4). Already subject to less transparency than other academic pay, the UK's professoriate also remains consistently male-dominated through vertical segregation; professorial pay is also where the largest proportion of the GPG amongst academic staff remains unexplained (Bandiera, Rana and Xu, 2016; Mumford and Sechel, 2019). In Chapter 6, this thesis also demonstrated a consistently wider range of pay for the professoriate than for all other academic staff combined. These outcomes are enabled by the disparate pay systems between academic staff below the professoriate and professors.

At the same time, universities maintain an understandable reliance on their use of job evaluation techniques to assert that pay is both transparent and fair. Job evaluation schemes have been portrayed as a valuable tool to reduce discretion and promote gender equality in pay systems. Acker (1989, p. 43) characterised the job evaluation exercise that she studied in the US state of Oregon as one with an objective of "true comparable worth", which she defined as "a wage setting system in which wages are pegged to unbiased, sex-neutral evaluated points, with some flexibility to respond to market forces, but with controls to keep inequities from creeping back over time." The key, however, is that job evaluation is meant to evaluate the 'job' not the person holding the job. The problem in the case of academic staff working in UK HE, as has been raised at several points in this thesis, is that academic promotions are based largely upon a somewhat subjective assessment of past performance of the person holding the job.

In her submission to the House of Common's Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee's (2018, p. 27) inquiry following the first round of GPG reporting, Sheila Wild, founder of the Equal Pay Portal, encouraged simplicity and transparency principles for pay setting, noting that "as a rule of thumb, the simpler the pay system, the less likely you are to get a gender pay gap." Deviations from the published pay scale, which occur as pay grade drift and that are enabled by market and retention supplements and inconsistencies with starting pay negotiations (or lack thereof), breed complication. This complication is exacerbated by the bifurcation of HE pay setting systems, with a collectively bargained sectoral pay scale for most academic pay but not for professors.

The UK's HE sector needs a re-negotiated Framework Agreement to reduce the slippage and deviation from published policy and practice that has been highlighted by this thesis. The current Framework Agreement excludes professors from sectoral collective bargaining. A re-negotiated agreement should address this internal logical conflict of the academic pay system by bringing the professoriate, a known source of significant unexplained GPG, under the sectoral collective bargaining agreement. This may be unpopular with some of those extreme outliers indicated by the academic pay range analysis in Chapter 6. However, if achieved, it would create transparency over professorial pay where presently there is little. It would also most likely lead to the compression of the range of pay for academic staff. Research across many national contexts indicates that wage compression, which is often achieved through trade union collective bargaining or minimum wage laws that raise the floor of low pay, is associated with a narrowing of the GPG (Blau and Kahn, 1996; Kahn, 2015). Tying the pay of all academic staff more closely together may also serve to strengthen the UCU's control over academic pay to achieve more reasonable pay uplifts for all academic staff because it would generate stronger incentives for professors to remain in the union and so therefore may boost both membership and the activist solidarity that is important to maintain organising strength. The UCU's (2019) 2019/20 pay claim reported that continual sub-inflation pay awards have meant that real academic pay has declined by 20.8% from 2009 to 2018 using RPI. Although relatively strong in the UK industrial relations context, the UCU has not been able to prevent this significant real decline in pay.

The current Framework Agreement also allows for 'attraction and retention premia' (also referred to as market and retention supplements) so long as the policies are agreed with local union branches inside each institution. Such fragmentation creates a risk of inconsistent or hidden practices. Based on his experience supporting UK employers at the Institute for Employment Studies, Brown (2019) advised that companies seeking to harness the power of transparency to reduce the GPG ought to reduce individualised and discretionary pay. A re-negotiated agreement should also bring these exceptional payments into nationally agreed policy if they could not move employers to drop them altogether.

Finally, following its implementation, the current Framework Agreement encouraged employers to engage in equalities monitoring through equal pay audits. However, the case studies' findings indicate that this 'encouragement' is not sufficient to yield full compliance. University Alpha conducted equal pay audits that made comparison with other universities impossible and obscured the impact of vertical segregation within the professoriate by reporting only within-professorial

band gaps. Additionally, by the 2016/17 academic year, University Beta had failed to ever conduct a full audit, having only completed one partial audit, which excluded professors, and they released only a short summary of the results (Chapter 6). In order to remedy these inconsistencies, and also in recognition of the European Commission's (2014a) recommendations on pay transparency, a re-negotiated and properly enforced mandate to conduct equal pay audits of all staff employed by the universities, from the lowest paid cleaners to the vice-chancellor and senior management team, ought to be agreed (Association of University Teachers, 2004; JNCHES, 2004; University and College Union, 2016b).

It is important to recognise that the legislative and collective bargaining reforms that have been recommended here are unlikely to be comprehensively realised in the near-term, as has already been somewhat indicated. Collectively, they are likely to meet with considerable political and economic barriers. Transposition of the forthcoming EU pay transparency directive is unlikely to be required, because of the UK's exit from the EU. Furthermore, there is a strong preference, at least by the current Conservative government, for voluntary equality measures. Relatedly, banning the use of salary history in recruitment pay decisions may be considered a heavy-handed intrusion on business decisions. The same government has also shown the extent to which it considers the GPG reporting mandate to be contingent. Amidst the recent Covid-19 crisis, the government did not just delay the reporting deadlines of Spring 2020; they removed the years' reporting requirement altogether ostensibly to reduce the burden on struggling businesses (Milne, 2020). This justification is weakened by the proximity of the cancellation to the normal deadline (within two weeks) and the fact that the snapshot date for the reporting was nearly a year prior (HM Parliament, 2017a). Most companies should have already completed or nearly completed the analysis, even if they had not yet officially reported. Thus, significant strengthening of the GPG mandate, which they have already presented as a cost and administrative burden on business, may be unlikely. Furthermore, the same party that brought in "the most significant trade union legislation since the Employment Act 1980" (as well as said 1980 Act) is unlikely to reverse its course (Ford and Novitz, 2016, p. 277). A rolling back of anti-trade union legislation is unlikely without a shift back to a Labour Party government. Given the recent breakdown of employment relations within the HE sector, which led to 22 days of strike action during the 2019/20 academic year in a complex dispute that remained unresolved as the exam season approached, amidst a global pandemic, significant re-negotiation of the Framework Agreement is also aspirational. However, in a diverse society full of complex organisations, eliminating the GPG and G/EPG is also aspirational. Continuing to press for even gradual changes towards comprehensive reform of the sort advised in this thesis remains important.

What is certain is that the nuanced picture presented by the development and implementation of an OSE analysis in this thesis means that reliance on improved legislation or written employer policies alone is insufficient. Future progress to narrow pay inequality will require buy-in from those with power in government and the organisations in which people work to acknowledge that 'business as usual' is insufficient. Organisational leaders must - perhaps bravely - be ready to acknowledge that for equalities monitoring to mean anything it must have the capacity to reform organisational practices, including those systems responsible for setting pay.

An intersectional approach has been adopted in this thesis to critically analyse the problematic social processes inside universities and transform academic analysis into practical change (Cho, Crenshaw and McCall, 2013). My goals have been to contribute and demonstrate the importance of the OSE as a tool to understand the organisational processes that contribute to the persistence of gender and ethnic-based pay inequality and to report these findings within larger academic and policy communities to foster change by encouraging organisational self-criticality. As activist groups like the UK's Women's Equality Party (2017) and the Fawcett Society (2019) have already argued: perfunctory pay transparency is insufficient to address deeply embedded workplace inequality. In order to lay the groundwork to generate practical impact flowing from the policy implications of this thesis, I have curated numerous key contacts through networking and outreach activities. During my PhD, I have contributed to an Australian legislative inquiry on pay transparency, BBC news' GPG coverage, a documentary scrutinising implementation of the UK's mandatory GPG regulations, and a UCU 'Equalities Tea(ch)-in.' I have developed plans to engage with the THE, a network of academics who are engaged with EDI activities, the BBC's Carrie Gracie, and AdvanceHE.[99]

9.7 Recommendations for Future Research

This thesis has raised a number of opportunities for further research that would require additional fieldwork or data access.[100] Chapter 7 found that identifying with the UK cultural context was not significantly related to social pay comparison. This was somewhat surprising given the tendency of scholars and politicians to attribute the income-talk taboo uncritically to national culture. Further research into whether/how the income-talk taboo and social pay comparison does/does not vary by country is needed. Potential questions for international comparative research may include:

- How consistent is the 'income-talk taboo' and its determining factors across different national contexts?

[99] See Appendix M for details of research impact and future plans.
[100] See Appendix N for details of my publication plan.

- Do stronger national policy narratives in support of pay transparency weaken income-talk taboos?
- Do more gender equal nations have weaker income-talk taboos?

Considering this thesis's intersectional approach, Chapter 7 also found the somewhat surprising result that pay discussion was not statistically different between men and women or BAME and white academics. Further analysis of this outcome in a randomised sample of academics across the UK would be a useful next step. This would require obtaining institutional affiliation and funding to enable purchasing a pre-fabricated list from the UK-based marketing company, A-Mail Academic, or creating a research team to manually collect these details from departmental directories of all UK university websites (Chapter 5). An additional approach could be to survey a representative sample of the UK labour force to yield generalisable conclusions about social pay comparison in the UK, rather than in UK HE. A representative sample could be achieved with Qualtrics panel services (Heen, Lieberman and Miethe, 2014).

Chapters 6 and 8 analysed the OSE inside Universities Alpha and Beta from the perspective of remuneration policy shapers, UCU representatives and academics. The lecturers through professors who were interviewed for this research largely reflect *core* staff, in the vernacular of Atkinson's (1985) flexible firm model. However, that overlooks the considerable and growing practice of hiring *periphery* casualised teaching and research staff in HE as a form of indirect control in universities (Atkins *et al.*, 2018; Jones and Oakley, 2018). The trend illustrates Standing's (2011, 2014b, 2014a) *precariat*. Hiring staff from relatively powerless demographics is a known form of indirect managerial control (Acker and Van Houten, 1974; Acker, 2006b). The precarity of casualised staff puts them in a position of powerlessness relative to core permanent academic staff. Recent analysis of HESA data by the UCU (2020b) has also shown that women and BAME staff are more likely than men and white staff to be casually employed in the HE sector. It is reasonable to expect that the silencing experiences faced by core academics in this thesis, like fear of being framed as a troublemaker, greedy, or ungrateful, already exacerbated by gender and ethnicity, would be yet more acute for casualised academics.

The OSE inside organisations might look considerably more secretive than presented in this thesis when focusing on casualised staff, even though the pay gap between male and female and white and BAME staff may be lessened due to the generally smaller range of pay available to them than to core academics. Casualisation keeps everyone's pay down, even as some demographic groups may experience silencing pressures more acutely, possibly resulting in higher barriers to escape precarity.

This thesis has focused on core academics to develop a new theoretical concept, without the confounding complexities of the experience of being a casualised employee in HE. With the OSE now proposed, it would be instructive to apply it to casualised staff in HE.

9.8 Concluding Thoughts

This thesis has delivered original theoretical, empirical, and methodological contributions. The key theoretical contribution has been the development of the OSE, which builds upon and pays tribute to Acker's (2006a, 2006b) inequality regimes approach. The OSE provides an analytical framework to practically assess organisational pay transparency efforts to reduce pay inequality in the light of the interrelated influence of employer strategies, social norms, and employee behaviour. This thesis has made an original empirical contribution by illustrating the hidden pay discussion behaviour of UK academics, as well as by demonstrating how the 'pay transparency' paradox helps to reproduce inequality inside two UK universities. The latter was made possible through thematic analysis from which the completed OSE emerged. The primary methodological contribution of this thesis has been to demonstrate the value of using a multi-layered, multi-strategy analysis incorporating Acker's (2006a, 2006b) inequality regimes to thereby generate a novel approach for gender and gender-ethnic based pay inequality research through the critical interrogation of accepted practices and settled social norms. Analysis across all four social domains has been essential to this end, illustrating Layder's (1998, 2006) insight that power relations within one domain impacts the other domains.

This thesis has revealed that the silence of transparency serves as an organisational lubricant to maintain the functioning of hierarchical power structures in academia. The silence of transparency refers to the role that workplace pay 'transparency performance' plays to legitimise existing pay and progression systems, to maintain or reinforce pay inequality, and to individualise pay inequality concerns as anomalies because 'transparent' pay structures have been established. University leaders are aware of the persistent GPG and are increasingly made aware of the worse G/EPG. The sector must reflect, in cooperation with unions, upon the equalities implications of the competing and conflicting imperatives of university pay setting principles. Academic pay, on the one hand, follows a transparent, collectively bargained pay scale that has become established across the sector. On the other hand, it is increasingly becoming responsive to market forces. Intensifying competitive forces from the Research Excellence Framework (REF) are likely only to exacerbate the pay grade drift that was acknowledged by policy shapers in Chapter 8 (Munir *et al.*, 2013; Morrish, 2016). Consistent with this expectation, unpublished analysis of Higher Education Statistics Agency

data (Healy, Pfefer and Sevilla, 2020) demonstrated a peak in the unexplained portion of the GPG in UK business schools, coinciding with the REF 2014 submission. While these structural forces enable the reproduction of inequalities, it was noteworthy that this thesis found university leaders who used their power resources to enable change at least within their realms of their institution. It is hoped that this thesis will also encourage greater awareness of the 'pay transparency' paradox and encourage deeper and wider reform within academia.

Nevertheless, this thesis also finds that organisational 'pay transparency' performance instils a belief in the fairness of pay systems, which means that people tacitly accept their pay most of the time, suggesting that those who do question their pay are the deviants. That professors were 3.6 times more likely to discuss their pay than the academic staff below the professoriate, where pay is covered by collective bargaining and set by institutional pay scales, is likely to be related to this implicit trust in reward systems. Yet, individuals sometimes face problems that prompt them to question their circumstances. Complex questions about pay (and related progression) are often met with silence, delay, or a negative response—rarely clarity. Many employees will seek to avoid being labelled as troublemakers or feel uncomfortable speaking candidly about pay and so they will not press for pay equality even if they suspect there may be a problem. After all, these moments of questioning are kept isolated, treated as individual problems. Without considerable effort, such as the process underpinning the intersectional feminist analysis of this thesis, the scale of cumulative disadvantage for women, BAME academics, and BAME women is difficult to see.

Where a remedy is proffered, individuals are often expected to solve their own problem, for instance, by applying for a bonus or a promotion. Systems of pay are defended as 'transparent', so criticism of those systems is met with scepticism. Silence from those with power over pay is the easiest response when employees without power question their pay. Ahmed's (2017, 2018a, 2019) research on complaint illustrates the fatigue experienced by those inside UK HE who dare to complain. Ahmed (2017) writes that "stories of complaint are often stories about the exhaustion of a process…When the processes have been exhausted a person probably has been too." Many will cease questioning, get on with their work, or leave. This is what Acker (2006b) meant by the employee compliance with inequalities that is achieved through managerial control. 'Transparent' pay systems are accepted, and silencing criticism of them becomes normalised because the income-talk taboo means pay is a private matter, a data protection concern, something we do not discuss in polite company. For academics experiencing inconsistency in their remuneration, this thesis shows how institutional silence brings the pay 'transparency paradox' to life.

Does the implication of the pay 'transparency paradox' mean that this thesis argues that pay transparency projects should be abandoned? Certainly not, but this thesis has established that pay transparency is not 'self-actuating' (Alexander, 2015), particularly whilst individual rights-based anti-discrimination protection remains the legal norm. Whilst the thesis sheds light on the conditions inside two case studies, the experiences therein are likely to reflect similar practices across the sector. It is my hope that this thesis provides both an impetus and a guide for university leadership--from department heads to vice-chancellors—to become more aware of the struggles through which their staff seek to advance their careers. In terms of theoretical development, the OSE analytical framework has broad applicability as a means to critically assess the transparency of policies and practices in other universities, as well as organisational contexts beyond the HE sector. The pay 'transparency agenda' is unfinished. However, through the collective efforts of supranational and national legislative reform, trade union collective-bargaining, and organisational openness to equalities data-driven change that have been recommended by this thesis, the pay transparency 'agenda' must continually and reflexively be nurtured at multiple levels both inside and beyond organisations.

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Appendix A: Acronyms and Glossary

Acronyms

- **AAUW**: American Association of University Women
- **ASHE**: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings
- **BAME:** Black, Asian and minority ethnic
- **ECU:** Equality Challenge Unit
- **EDI**: equality, diversity, and inclusion
- **EHRC:** Equality and Human Rights Commission
- **EPA**: Equal Pay Act
- **EPG:** ethnic pay gap (see glossary entry)
- **ET**: employment tribunal
- **EU:** European Union
- **GEO**: Government Equalities Office
- **G/EPG**: gender/ethnic pay gap (see glossary entry)
- **GPG**: gender pay gap (see glossary entry)
- **HE**: higher education
- **HEI**: higher education institution
- **HESA:** Higher Education Statistics Agency
- **HoD:** Head of Department (see glossary entry)
- **ILO:** International Labour Organization
- **IWPR**: Institute for Women's Policy Research
- **JNCHES:** Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff
- **LFS**: Labour Force Survey
- **N-BIAS**: nonresponse bias impact assessment
- **NIHR**: National Institute for Health Research
- **NEW JNCHES**: New Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff
- **ONS**: Office for National Statistics
- **OSE**: organisational salary environment
- **PSC**: pay secrecy clause
- **PSED**: Public Sector Equality Duty
- **RAE**: Research Assessment Exercise
- **REF**: Research Excellence Framework
- **STEMM**: science, technology, engineering, maths, and medicine
- **SET**: science, engineering, and technology
- **SOC**: Standard Occupational Classification
- **THE**: Times Higher Education
- **TUC**: Trades Union Congress
- **UCEA**: Universities and Colleges Employers Association
- **UCU**: University and College Union
- **VC:** vice-chancellor (see glossary entry)
- **WERS:** Workplace Employment Relations Survey

Glossary

- **Academic**: Academic in this thesis is used in the broadest sense in this thesis in discussion of survey respondents, where it refers to anyone working in HE who engages in paid teaching, research or teaching and research activity. Academic is used in discussion of interviewees in this thesis to refer to lecturers, senior lecturers, and readers, unless essential it is essential to the analytical point being made to use the specific job title. This is to further anonymise experiences recounted by avoiding attaching specific job titles to interviewees. Academics in this sense are those whose pay is subject to UK national collective bargaining between the UCU and UCEA. Where academic interviewee respondents are not being discussed in contrast with professors, academic may also be used to denote the broader usage, which also includes professors as defined below.
- **Department**: The term department is used in this thesis to describe organisationally and disciplinary grouped academics within a higher education institution, whether that grouping is in institutional parlance referred to as a department or something else. To obscure any use of alternative language by interviewees, thus, to preserve anonymity, all instances of department used in quotations appear in [square brackets] regardless of which term the speaker used.
- **EPG:** The ethnic pay gap refers to the difference in pay between BAME and white academics (broader usage unless otherwise specified).
- **G/EPG:** The gender/ethnic pay gap refers to the difference in pay between BAME male and White male and BAME female and White male academics (broader usage of academic unless otherwise specified).
- **GPG**: The gender pay gap refers to the difference in pay between male and female academics (broader usage unless otherwise specified).
- **Head of Department**: The term head of department (or head/HoD) is used in this thesis to describe all academics with managerial oversight over a grouping of academic staff, whether that grouping is in institutional parlance referred to as a department or something else. To obscure any use of alternative language by interviewees, thus, to preserve anonymity, all instances of the head of department (or head/HOD) used in quotations appear in [square brackets] regardless of which term the speaker used.
- **Kafkaesque:** The term Kafkaesque is used in this thesis as a literary metaphor to characterise the feeling by academic staff of being trapped in a bureaucratic web where pay and related career progression policies and processes are seemingly transparent and yet inconsistencies emerge and persist without remedy.
- **Radical Pay Transparency:** The term radical pay transparency is used in this thesis to denote the (somewhat unusual) instances where individuals' actual pay levels are made known. This is in contrast to more common forms of aggregate pay transparency, where only information describing the pay of categories of individuals is revealed, such as the pay of women in a certain company, industry, or country.
- **Professor**: Professor is used in this thesis only to refer to the members of academic staff at the top level of the standard profession, whose pay is not subject to UK national collective bargaining between the UCU and UCEA.

- **Vice-Chancellor**: The term vice-chancellor (or VC) is used in this thesis to describe the most senior member of academic and administrative staff of a university, whether that role is in institutional parlance referred to as vice-chancellor or something else. To obscure any use of alternative language by interviewees, thus, to preserve anonymity, all instances of vice-chancellor (or VC) used in quotations appear in [square brackets] regardless of what term the speaker used.

Appendix B: Consent Information for Social Pay Comparison Survey Respondents

<u>Research study:</u> The Cloak of Silence: A Critical Analysis of the Relationship between Pay Secrecy Culture and the Gender Pay Gap within UK Higher Education

I would like to invite you to be part of this research project, which aims to capture the often-hidden behaviour of discussing pay (or not). You should only agree to take part if you want to; it is entirely up to you. If you choose not to take part there won't be any disadvantages for you and you will hear no more about it. Please read the following information carefully before you decide to take part; this will tell you why the research is being done and what you will be asked to do if you take part. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. If you decide to take part you will be asked to tick the below consent box to say that you agree and begin the survey. You remain free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

<u>About the research</u>:

The research

Pay is an important element of most people's working lives. I am interested to hear about the circumstances under which academics working in UK higher education choose to discuss their own pay or avoid this topic when engaging with their colleagues. This independent research is part of a PhD thesis that I am undertaking at Queen Mary University of London. This is not a survey issued by Queen Mary University of London or any other university or institution.

Taking part

This survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete. If during the course of the survey there are any questions you do not wish to answer, you may skip them or withdraw from the survey entirely. If you complete the survey but skip questions, your data may still be used. If you withdraw from the survey, your data will not be used. The identity of those completing the survey will be kept confidential and anonymous at all further stages of the research. However, the university at which he/she is employed may be associated with the response data for analytical purposes. This means that any reference to these survey responses in my PhD thesis or published articles will not unveil the specific identity of any respondents. This is in line with Queen Mary University of London's ethical guidance, which has awarded ethical approval to this research.

Two participants will be drawn at random to receive a £20 Pret a Manger gift voucher as a thank you for participation following the conclusion of the study. If you wish to be considered in this draw, you will be able to provide contact details at the end of the survey. All survey responses will remain anonymous and confidential.

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<u>Note</u>: It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked tick the below consent box in order to advance to the survey.

If you have any questions or concerns about the manner in which the study was conducted please, in the first instance, contact the researcher responsible for the study. If this is unsuccessful, or not appropriate, please contact the Secretary at the Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee, Room W117, Queen's Building, Mile End Campus Mile End Road, London or research-ethics@qmul.ac.uk.

Appendix C: Consent Information sheet for Interview participants

Research study: The Cloak of Silence: A Critical Analysis of the Relationship between Pay Secrecy Culture and the Gender Pay Gap within UK Higher Education

We would like to invite you to be part of this research project, if you would like to. You should only agree to take part if you want to; it is entirely up to you. If you choose not to take part, there won't be any disadvantages for you, and you will hear no more about it. Please read the following information carefully before you decide to take part; this will tell you why the research is being done and what you will be asked to do if you take part. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. If you decide to take part, you will be asked to sign the attached consent form to say that you agree. You are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

About the research:

The research

I am interested to hear about the circumstances under which academics working in UK higher education choose to discuss their own pay or avoid this topic when engaging with their colleagues and the motivations those employees feel influence that behaviour. This research is part of a PhD thesis that I am undertaking at Queen Mary University of London.

Taking part

Interviews will take place in person at the location and time agreed by the interviewee. That means, the researcher will secure an interview location off the campus of the interviewees' employer if he/she so desires. Interviews will ideally take place between April 2017 and September 2017. The identity of the interviewee will be kept confidential and anonymous at all further stages of the research. The person will be referred to only in regard to relevant demographic categories, such as gender, ethnicity/race, seniority/job level, and union association, for analytical purposes. This means that any reference to the content of these interviews in my PhD thesis or published articles will not reveal the identity of any interviewees. This is in line with Queen Mary University of London's ethical guidance. The Ethics of Research Committee has approved this research.

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Note: It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form.

If you have any questions or concerns about the manner in which the study was conducted please, in the first instance, contact the researcher responsible for the study. If this is unsuccessful, or not appropriate, please contact the Secretary at the Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee, Room W117, Queen's Building, Mile End Campus Mile End Road, London or research-ethics@qmul.ac.uk.

Queen Mary
University of London

Consent form for Interviewees

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

Title of Study: **The Cloak of Silence: A Critical Analysis of the Relationship between Pay Secrecy Culture and the Gender Pay Gap within UK Higher Education**

Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee Ref: _QMERC2016/51_____

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organizing the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part.

If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

I understand that if I decide at any other time during the research that I no longer wish to participate in this project, I can notify the researchers involved and be withdrawn from it immediately.

I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Participant's Statement:

I _____ agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project and understand what the research study involves.

I do/do not (please circle one) consent to have my interview audio recorded.

Signed: Date:

Investigator's Statement:

I _____ confirm that I have carefully explained the nature, demands and any foreseeable risks (where applicable) of the proposed research to the volunteer.

Signed: Date:

Appendix D: Pay Inequality in UK HE: Higher Education Statistics Agency

Dataset: Higher Education Statistics Agency Annual Data from 2003/04 through 2015/16

Not Directly Used in the Analysis

- **salary16:** created by the researcher; inflated f_xsalr01 into real 2016 value using the Consumer Price Index from the UK's Office for National Statistics
    - **scale data:** individual annual gross income in 2016 terms

- **F_year**: academic year (2003/04 through 2015/16)
    - **String data:** academic year

- **Ethnic:** ethnic background of respondents
    - **W:** White
    - **O:** Other (including mixed)
    - **U:** Unknown
    - **21:** Black or Black British - Caribbean
    - **22:** Black or Black British - African
    - **29:** Other Black background
    - **31:** Asian or Asian British - Indian
    - **32:** Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
    - **33:** Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi
    - **34:** Chinese
    - **39:** Other Asian Background

Directly Used in the Analysis:

- **Year:** created by researcher, re-coded from F_year in original data files such that the academic year 2003/04 became 2004, 2004/05 became 2005, etc.; used to disaggregate data by year
    - **2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016**

- **f_acempfun:** academic function; analysis based on values 1-3 only
    - **1:** Teaching only
    - **2:** Research only
    - **3:** Teaching and research
    - **9:** Not teaching and/or research

- **f_moemp:** mode of employment (analysis based only value 1: full-time employees)
    - **1:** full-time
    - **2:** full-time, term-time only
    - **3:** part-time
    - **4:** part-time, term time only

    - **5:** atypical

- **f_xsalr01:** annual gross salary in GBP
    - **scale data:** individual annual gross income in nominal terms

- **f_sex:** sex of the respondent
    - **1:** Male
    - **2:** Female

- **BAME:** created by the researcher; recoded from Ethnic in two stages, such that all ethnicity responses other than white became BAME (original values: O, 21, 22, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34 and 39), white remained white and unknown became missing data)
    - **1:** BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic)
    - **0:** White

Appendix E: Social Pay Comparison Survey Instrument

Eligibility Questions

0.) Are you currently employed by [HEI provider] to engage in research and/or teaching?

- *Yes*
- *No*

If no, text displayed: *Thank you for your interest. Unfortunately, you are not qualified to complete this survey. Thank you for your time.*

If yes, text displayed: *Thank you for your interest. You are eligible to complete this survey. Please answer any questions about your employment with regards to your employment at [HEI Provider] even if you are also employed elsewhere. Please proceed by clicking the red advance arrow below to begin with a few demographic questions about yourself. These will be followed by four further sets of questions about your: position within the academic labour market, work and educational experience, experience discussing pay (or not), and your income. All answers will remain anonymous and confidential.*

Section 1: Demographic Factors
The next few questions will help provide some demographic information about you.

1. What is your sex?
    - *Dichotomous response: Male/Female*

2. How old are you (in years)?
    - *Interval data response*

3. What is your ethnicity?
    - *White (all white ethnic groups including white British)*
    - *Black (black Caribbean, black African, black British and black other)*
    - *Asian (Asian Indian, Asian Pakistani, Asian Bangladeshi, Asian British and Asian other)*
    - *Chinese*
    - *Mixed*
    - *Other ethnic background*

4. Some research has suggested that national cultures may have differing pay secrecy norms. With what country do you most strongly identify (please select only one; this does not need to reflect your current citizenship or residence)?

- *(Drop down list)*
- *Afghanistan*
- *Albania*
- *Algeria*
- *Andorra*
- *Angola*
- *Antigua and Barbuda*
- *Argentina*
- *Armenia*
- *Aruba*
- *Australia*
- *Austria*
- *Azerbaijan*
- *Bahamas, The*
- *Bahrain*
- *Bangladesh*
- *Barbados*
- *Belarus*
- *Belgium*
- *Belize*
- *Benin*
- *Bhutan*
- *Bolivia*
- *Bosnia and Herzegovina*
- *Botswana*
- *Brazil*
- *Brunei*
- *Bulgaria*
- *Burkina Faso*
- *Burma*
- *Burundi*
- *Cambodia*
- *Cameroon*
- *Canada*
- *Cabo Verde*
- *Central African Republic*
- *Chad*
- *Chile*
- *China*
- *Colombia*
- *Comoros*
- *Congo, Democratic Republic of the*
- *Congo, Republic of the*
- *Costa Rica*
- *Cote d'Ivoire*
- *Croatia*
- *Cuba*
- *Curacao*
- *Cyprus*
- *Czech Republic*
- *Denmark*
- *Djibouti*
- *Dominica*
- *Dominican Republic*
- *Ecuador*
- *Egypt*
- *El Salvador*
- *Equatorial Guinea*
- *Eritrea*
- *Estonia*
- *Ethiopia*
- *Fiji*
- *Finland*
- *France*
- *Gabon*
- *Gambia, The*
- *Georgia*
- *Germany*
- *Ghana*
- *Greece*
- *Grenada*
- *Guatemala*
- *Guinea*
- *Guinea-Bissau*
- *Guyana*
- *Haiti*
- *Holy See*
- *Honduras*
- *Hong Kong*
- *Hungary*
- *Iceland*
- *India*
- *Indonesia*
- *Iran*
- *Iraq*
- *Ireland*
- *Israel*
- *Italy*
- *Jamaica*
- *Japan*
- *Jordan*
- *Kazakhstan*
- *Kenya*
- *Kiribati*
- *Korea, North*
- *Korea, South*
- *Kosovo*
- *Kuwait*
- *Kyrgyzstan*
- *Laos*
- *Latvia*
- *Lebanon*
- *Lesotho*
- *Liberia*
- *Libya*
- *Liechtenstein*
- *Lithuania*
- *Luxembourg*
- *Macau*
- *Macedonia*
- *Madagascar*
- *Malawi*
- *Malaysia*
- *Maldives*
- *Mali*
- *Malta*
- *Marshall Islands*
- *Mauritania*
- *Mauritius*
- *Mexico*
- *Micronesia*
- *Moldova*
- *Monaco*
- *Mongolia*
- *Montenegro*
- *Morocco*
- *Mozambique*
- *Namibia*
- *Nauru*
- *Nepal*
- *Netherlands*
- *New Zealand*
- *Nicaragua*
- *Niger*
- *Nigeria*
- *North Korea*
- *Norway*
- *Oman*
- *Pakistan*
- *Palau*
- *Palestinian Territories*
- *Panama*
- *Papua New Guinea*
- *Paraguay*
- *Peru*
- *Philippines*
- *Poland*
- *Portugal*
- *Qatar*
- *Romania*
- *Russia*
- *Rwanda*
- *Saint Kitts and Nevis*
- *Saint Lucia*
- *Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*
- *Samoa*
- *San Marino*
- *Sao Tome and Principe*
- *Saudi Arabia*
- *Senegal*
- *Serbia*
- *Seychelles*
- *Sierra Leone*
- *Singapore*
- *Sint Maarten*
- *Slovakia*
- *Slovenia*
- *Solomon Islands*
- *Somalia*
- *South Africa*
- *South Korea*
- *South Sudan*
- *Spain*
- *Sri Lanka*
- *Sudan*
- *Suriname*
- *Swaziland*
- *Sweden*
- *Switzerland*
- *Syria*
- *Taiwan*
- *Tajikistan*
- *Tanzania*
- *Thailand*
- *Timor-Leste*
- *Togo*
- *Tonga*

- *Trinidad and Tobago*
- *Tunisia*
- *Turkey*
- *Turkmenistan*
- *Tuvalu*
- *Uganda*
- *Ukraine*
- *United Arab Emirates*
- *United Kingdom*
- *United States of America*
- *Uruguay*
- *Uzbekistan*
- *Vanuatu*
- *Venezuela*
- *Vietnam*
- *Yemen*
- *Zambia*
- *Zimbabwe*

5. Some research has suggested that people with different political affiliations may exhibit different pay comparison behaviour. If a new general election were held tomorrow, which political party would you support (please select your desired option irrespective of whether you are actually eligible to vote in the UK)?
    - *(drop down list)*
    - *Conservative Party*
    - *Democrat Unionist Party*
    - *Green Party*
    - *Labour Party*
    - *Liberal Democrat Party*
    - *Plaid Cymru*
    - *Scottish National Party*
    - *Sinn Fein*
    - *Social Democrat & Labour Party*
    - *UK Independence Party*
    - *Ulster Unionist Party*
    - *Other*
    - *I would not vote*

6. Are you a parent?
    - *Yes (continue to question 7)*
    - *No (skip to question 10)*

7. How many children do you have?
    - *Interval data response*

8. Are any of your children 18 years old or younger?
    - *Yes*
    - *No*

9. Have you taken any parental leave (including maternity, paternity, or adoption leave) following the birth/adoption of any of your children?
    - *Yes*
    - *No*

10. How many months of parental leave (including maternity, paternity, or adoption leave) have you taken in total (where less than one month, please record 0)?
    - *Interval data response*

Section 2: Labour Market Factors.

The next few questions will help identify your position within the academic labour market.

11. Are you a University and College Union member?
    - *Dichotomous response: Yes/No*

12. On what type of contract are you currently employed by [HEI provider]?
    - *Fixed Term*
    - *Open Ended/Permanent*

13. Have you applied for any other jobs in the past 12 months?
    - *Dichotomous response: Yes/No*

14. (IF YES) For what reason(s) did you apply for any other jobs (please select all that apply)?
    - *To secure a pay rise in new employment*
    - *To secure more senior employment elsewhere*
    - *To secure employment in a new geographic location*
    - *To seek a career change (for example – to leave academia)*
    - *To secure an additional job*
    - *My current contract ended or was ending*
    - *I was made redundant*
    - *To secure a counter offer as leverage for a pay rise in my current employment*

15. If there are any reasons you applied for any other jobs that were not listed in the previous question, please write them in the space below.
    - *Qualitative response box*

Section 3: Human Capital Factors

The next few questions will help characterise your education and work experience.

16. What is your highest educational qualification held?
    - ***Doctorate*** *(includes doctorate degrees)*
    - ***Other higher degree*** *(includes other higher degrees including master's degrees)*
    - ***Other postgraduate qualification*** *(includes other postgraduate qualifications including professional qualifications and Postgraduate and Professional Graduate Certificates in Education (PGCE)).*
    - ***First degree*** *(includes first degrees including those with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS))*
    - ***Other undergraduate qualification*** *(includes other qualifications at first-degree level including professional qualifications, Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE), Higher National Diploma (HND), Higher National Certificate (HNC) and all other undergraduate qualifications (including professional qualifications).*

- ***Other*** *(includes A level, Scottish Higher or equivalent (NVQ/SVQ Level 3); O level/GCSE or equivalent (NVQ/SVQ Level 2); other qualifications and no qualifications)*

17. What best describes your job title within the university?

- *(make as a dropdown)*
- *Professor*
- *Senior Lecturer*
- *Reader*
- *Principal Research Fellow*
- *Lecturer*
- *Senior Research Fellow*
- *Research Fellow*
- *Researcher*
- *Senior Research Assistant*
- *Teaching Fellow*
- *Research Assistant*
- *Teaching Assistant*

18. Which best describes your job function within the university?

- *Teaching and Research*
- *Teaching Only*
- *Research Only*

19. How many years have you worked as an academic at your current university?

- *Interval data response*

20. How many years have your worked as an academic at any institution, inclusive of your time at your current institution, since completion of your previously reported highest educational qualification?
    - *Interval data response*

21. Within which subject area does your current academic role best lie?
    - *(select from drop down menu)*
    - *Agriculture, forestry, and food science*
    - *Anatomy and physiology*
    - *Anthropology and development studies*
    - *Archaeology*
    - *Architecture, built environment and planning*
    - *Area Studies*
    - *Art and Design*
    - *Biosciences*

- *Business and Management Studies*
- *Catering and Hospitality Management*
- *Chemical Engineering*
- *Chemistry*
- *Civil Engineering*
- *Classics*
- *Clinical Dentistry*
- *Clinical Medicine*
- *Continuing Education*
- *Earth, marine and environmental sciences*
- *Economics and Econometrics*
- *Education*
- *Electrical, electronic and computer engineering*
- *English Language and Literature*
- *General Engineering*
- *Geography and environmental studies*
- *Health and Community Studies*
- *History*
- *IT, systems sciences, and computer software engineering*
- *Law*
- *Mathematics*
- *Mechanical, aero and production engineering*
- *Media Studies*
- *Mineral, metallurgy, and materials engineering*
- *Modern Languages*
- *Music, dance, drama and performing arts*
- *Nursing and allied health professions*
- *Pharmacy and pharmacology*
- *Philosophy*
- *Physics*
- *Politics and international studies*
- *Psychology and behavioural sciences*
- *Social work and social policy*
- *Sociology*
- *Sports Science and leisure studies*
- *Theology and religious studies*
- *Veterinary Sciences*

Section 4: Pay Discussion Behaviour

The following questions are about your experience discussing pay with your co-workers (or not). Please be assured that all responses to this survey will remain anonymous and confidential.

22. This research specifically concerns conversations you may have about your pay level relative to the pay level of others. Do you ever talk about pay with your co-workers?
    - *Yes (continue to question 19)*
    - *No (skip to question 20)*

23. With whom do you most frequently engage in pay discussions? Please select one response from each set of option clusters (sex, ethnicity, age, job category, union membership).

SEX

- *Employees mainly of the same sex*
- *Employees mainly of a different sex to me*
- *No specific tendency*

ETHNICITY

- *Employees mainly who are of a similar ethnic background as myself*
- *Employees mainly who are of a different ethnic background to myself*
- *No specific tendency*

AGE

- *Employees mainly who are younger than me*
- *Employees mainly who are near my age*
- *Employees mainly who are older than me*
- *No specific tendency*

JOB CATEGORY

- *Employees working at a junior level to myself*
- *Employees working at a similar job level to myself*
- *Employees working at a senior job level to myself*
- *No specific tendency*

UNION MEMBERSHIP

- *Employees who belong to the University and College Union*
- *Employees who do not belong to the University and College Union*
- *No specific tendency*
- *I am not generally aware who does or does not belong to the University and College Union*

24. Please share any comments you may have regarding why you feel your pay discussions follow the patterns you have just reported.
    - *Qualitative Response Box*

25. How—if at all—do you feel the following parties encourage pay discussion among employees of your workplace?
    - My Management
    - My UCU Branch

- My Co-Workers
- UK Employment Law
    - *(for each of the above: Generally Encourages Pay Discussion Among Employees*
    - *Generally Does Not Encourage or Discourage Pay Discussion Among Employees*
    - *Generally Discourages Pay Discussion Among Employees*

26. Please select the option that best reflects your opinion regarding the following sentiments:
    - British people have a strong aversion to talking about their salary and related matters.
    - Discussing pay with one's colleagues helps one to determine whether one is being paid fairly or not
    - If I learned someone with a similar job to me was paid more than I am, I would feel inadequate.
    - If I learned someone with a similar job to me was paid more than I am, I would take some action to attempt to remedy the imbalance.
    - I am satisfied with my current level of income from my university.
    - People who discuss pay are generally being pushy or overbearing
        - *(for each of the above: Strongly agree*
        - *Agree*
        - *Somewhat agree*
        - *Neither agree nor disagree*
        - *Somewhat disagree*
        - *Disagree*
        - *Strongly Disagree*

27. In practise, how—if at all—do you think that the following sentiments influence your decision to discuss pay or not at your current workplace?
    - British people have a strong aversion to talking about their salary and related matters.
    - Discussing pay with one's colleagues helps one to determine whether one is being paid fairly or not.
    - If I learned someone with a similar job to me was paid more than I am, I would feel inadequate.
    - People who discuss pay are generally being pushy or overbearing.
        - *(for each of the above: Generally Encourages Me to Discuss My Pay With Other Employees*
        - *Generally Does Not Encourage or Discourage Me to Discuss My Pay With Other Employees*
        - *Generally Discourages Me from Discussing My Pay With Other Employees*

28. Regardless of your conversations with co-workers, you may have conversations about your pay level relative to the pay level of others outside of your current institution. Do you ever talk about pay with academics who work at institutions which you do not work?
    - *Yes*
    - *No*

29. New websites, such as Glassdoor and Emolument, have developed to allow people to share their wages and other information about their employers anonymously. Have you ever used a website like this?
    - *Yes*
    - *No*

30. The University and College Union has also created a web tool called Rate for the Job, which allows users to assess their pay against the pay of those with similar jobs across several universities. Have you ever used Rate for the Job?
    - *Yes*
    - *No*

31. The Times Higher Education (THE) has published the wage gap for academic staff and professors at higher education providers across the UK annually since at least 2007. Do you feel the THE Pay Survey has had any impact on awareness or transparency about pay in your workplace?
    - *I feel it has had no impact on awareness or transparency about pay in my workplace. (continue to question 37)*
    - *I feel it has had moderate impact on awareness or transparency about pay in my workplace. (continue to question 37)*
    - *I feel it has had significant impact on awareness or transparency about pay in my workplace. (continue to question 37)*
    - *I was not aware of the Times Higher Education Pay Survey (skip to question 38)*

32. Please describe why you feel the Times Higher Education Pay Survey has had the impact you just reported on awareness or transparency about pay in your workplace?
    - *Qualitative response box*

33. The Athena SWAN Charter was established to encourage and recognise commitment to advancing the careers of women working in higher education and research. Has your department applied for an Athena SWAN award (or the formerly awarded Gender Equality Mark)?
    - *Yes (proceed to question 39)*
    - *No (skip to question 41)*
    - *I don't know (skip to question 41)*

34. Do you feel the application process has had any impact on awareness or transparency about pay in your department?

- *I feel it has had no impact on awareness or transparency about pay within my department.*
- *I feel it has had moderate impact on awareness or transparency about pay in my department.*
- *I feel it has had significant impact on awareness or transparency about pay in my department.*
- I don't know

35. Please describe why the Athena Swan award (or the formerly awarded Gender Equality Mark) application process has had the impact you just reported on awareness or transparency of pay in your department.
    - Qualitative response box

Section 5: Income Details

We want to understand whether someone's level of pay may influence the decision to discuss pay with co-workers. These final few questions will provide details about your earnings. Please be assured that all responses to this survey will remain anonymous and confidential.

<u>INCOME FACTORS</u>

36. What is your approximate gross annual income from [HEI provider] in GBP (*£)?*
    - *Interval data response.*

37. (If previous question left blank only): What income band reflects your approximate gross annual income from [HEI provider] in GBP (*£)?*
    - *£0-£10,000*
    - *£10,001-£20,000*
    - *£20,001-£30,000*
    - *£30,001-£40,000*
    - *£40,001-£50,000*
    - *£50,001-£60,000*
    - *£60,001-£70,000*
    - *£70,001-£80,000*
    - *£80,001-£90,000*
    - *£90,001-£100,000*
    - *£100,001-£110,000*
    - *£110,001-£120,000*
    - *£120,001-£130,000*
    - *£130,001 or more*

38. Is this annual income you have just reported based on year-round employment (allowing for any normal holidays, sick leave, etc)?

- *Yes (skip to question 44)*
- *No (continue to question 43)*

39. On how many weeks employment per year is this annual income based?
    - *Interval response*

40. Is the annual income you have just reported based on full-time employment?
    - *Yes (skip to question 47)*
    - *No (continue to question 45)*

41. As your reported annual income is not based on full-time employment, are you employed on an hourly or a fractional contract?
    - *Hourly (skip to question 47)*
    - *Fractional (continue to question 46)*

42. What fraction of full-time employment are you contracted to work (for instance, a 70% contract would be reported 0.7 below)?
    - *Interval response (if empty and if not empty, skip to question 48)*

43. How many hours per week are you contracted to work?
    - *Interval response*

44. Is the annual income you have been reporting in the previous few questions determined solely by an external funding body?
    - *Yes*
    - *No*

45. Have you received any bonus pay from [HEI provider] for the past three academic years (2013/14; 2014/15, or 2015-2016)?
- *Yes (continue to question 50)*
- *No (skip to question 52)*

46. What was the approximate gross value in GBP (*£)* of that bonus (where more than one bonus has been awarded to you during the past three academic years, please report the value of the largest year's bonus)?
    - *Interval response*

47. For what was this bonus awarded (select as many as apply)?
    - *Exceptional Teaching/Student Engagement*
    - *Exceptional Publications/Research*
    - *Exceptional Contribution to Management/Administration*
    - *Having Taken On Extra Unpaid Responsibilities in Any Areas*
    - *Other*

48. Please elaborate on what this bonus was awarded for below if you would like.
    - *Qualitative response box*

49. Do you hold any extra titles, duties, or responsibilities within your department, which involve work beyond your main academic title, such as director of a research centre or a programme, head of a department, etc.?
    - *Yes (continue to question 53)*
    - *No (skip to question 55)*

50. Please record any extra titles, duties, or responsibilities within your department, which involve work beyond your main academic title, such as director of a research centre or a programme, head of a department, etc., which you hold below.
    - *Qualitative response box*

51. Do you receive additional pay specifically for taking on any of these title(s) or duty(ies)?
    - *Yes*
    - *No*

52. Have you ever been promoted since beginning work at your current employer?
    - *Yes (continue to question 56)*
    - *No (skip to question 57)*

53. How many years did you work at your current employer before you received your first promotion?
    - *Interval response*

54. Research has suggested that the proportion of men and women within an occupation can have an influence on men and women's pay levels. Thinking of your own department, which best describes its gender composition of the academic staff?
    - *Male-Dominated (70%+ male)*
    - *Female-Dominated (70%+ female)*
    - *Integrated (<70% male and <70% female)*

55. The researcher may be conducting further research at your university through qualitative interviews to discuss your pay comparison behaviour and the culture around pay as you experience it. If you are willing to volunteer to be interviewed for this purpose, please put your email address in the box below. Your responses to this survey will remain anonymous and confidential. Your details will never be used in connection with your previous responses.
    - *Qualitative response*

56. Two participants will be drawn at random to receive a £20 Pret a Manger gift voucher as a thank you for participation following the conclusion of the study. All survey responses will

remain anonymous and confidential whether you choose to enter the draw or not. If you wish to be entered in the draw, please provide your email address below. Your details will never be used in connection with your previous responses.

- *Qualitative response*

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

Appendix F: Survey Respondent Demographics

	Count	Valid %	All %*
Sex			
Male	217	56.5%	56.5%
Female	167	43.5%	43.5%
N	384		
Missing	0		0.0%
Ethnicity			
White (all white ethnic groups including white British)	321	84.3%	83.6%
Black (black Caribbean, black African, black British and black other)	3	0.8%	0.8%
Asian (Asian Indian, Asian Pakistani, Asian Bangladeshi, Asian British and Asian other)	33	8.7%	8.6%
Chinese	5	1.3%	1.3%
Mixed	9	2.4%	2.3%
Other ethnic background	10	2.6%	2.6%
N	**381**		
Missing	3		0.8%
BAME			
White (all white ethnic groups including white British)	321	84.3	83.6
BAME**	60	15.7	15.6
N	**381**		
Missing	3		0.8
Age (Shown In Ranges)			
21-30	17	4.6	4.4
31-40	148	39.7	38.5
41-50	102	27.3	26.6
51-60	74	19.8	19.3
61-70	30	8.0	7.8
71-80	2	0.5	0.5
N	**373**		
Missing	11		2.9
Parental Status			
Parent	203	53.0	52.9
Not a Parent	180	47.0	46.9
N	**383**		
Missing	1		0.3
Cultural Identification			
Identifies most strongly with UK culture	205	55.1	53.4
Identifies most strongly with culture outside the UK	167	44.9	43.5
N	**372**		
Missing	12		3.1
Voting Preference if General Election Held Tomorrow			
Conservative	36	9.8	9.4
Democrat Unionist	1	0.3	0.3
Green	50	13.7	13.0
Labour	149	40.7	38.8
Liberal Democrat	80	21.9	20.8
Plaid Cymru	1	0.3	0.3
Scottish National Party	3	0.8	0.8
Social Democrat & Labour Party	9	2.5	2.3
UK Independence	3	0.8	0.8
Other	10	2.7	2.6
I would not vote	24	6.6	6.3
N	**366**		
Missing	18		4.7

**Includes respondents with missing data in denominator*
***All respondents reporting anything other than white*
**** Based on* (Equality Challenge Unit, 2015b)

	Count	Valid %	All %*
Trade Union Membership			
UCU Member	170	44.6	44.3
Not a UCU Member	211	55.4	54.9
N	**381**		
Missing	3		0.8
Contract Type			
Fixed Term	109	28.6	28.4
Open Ended/Permanent	272	71.4	70.8
N	**381**		
Missing	2		0.5
Contract Status			
Full Time	346	92.3	90.1
Part Time	29	7.7	7.7
N	**375**		
Missing	9		2.3
Applied for Jobs			
Have applied for any other jobs in past 12 months	103	27.0	26.8
Have not applied for any other jobs in past 12 months	279	73.0	72.7
N	**382**		
Missing	2		0.5
Higher Education Qualification Held			
Doctorate	346	90.1	90.1
Other higher degree (including master's degrees)	32	8.3	8.3
Other postgraduate qualification	2	0.5	0.5
First Degree	2	0.5	0.5
Other undergraduate qualification	2	0.5	0.5
N	**384**		
Missing	0		0.0
Job Title			
Professor	87	22.8	22.7
Reader	46	12.1	12.0
Senior Lecturer	81	21.3	21.1
Principal Research Fellow	1	0.3	0.3
Lecturer	75	19.7	19.5
Senior Research Fellow	6	1.6	1.6
Research Fellow	24	6.3	6.3
Researcher	28	7.3	7.3
Senior Research Assistant	6	1.6	1.6
Teaching Fellow	7	1.8	1.8
Research Assistant	18	4.7	4.7
Teaching Assistant	2	0.5	0.5
N	**381**		
Missing	3		0.8
Job Function			
Teaching and Research	277	72.1	72.1
Teaching Only	30	7.8	7.8
Research Only	77	20.1	20.1
N	**384**		
Missing	0		0.0

**Includes respondents with missing data in denominator*

***All respondents reporting anything other than white*

**** Based on* (Equality Challenge Unit, 2015b)

	Count	Valid %	All %*
Years Worked as an Academic at Current University			
0 to 9.9	244	64.4	63.5
10 to 19.9	98	25.9	25.5
20 to 29.9	29	7.7	7.6
30 to 39.9	8	2.1	2.1
N	**379**		
Missing	5		1.3
Years Worked as an Academic at any University			
0 to 9.9	158	41.6	41.1
10 to 19.9	117	30.8	30.5
20 to 29.9	78	20.5	20.3
30 to 39.9	22	5.8	5.7
40 to 49.9	5	1.3	1.3
N	**380**		
Missing	4		1.0
Working in a Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) or non-SET discipline			
SET	218	58.0	56.8
Non-SET	158	42.0	41.1
N	**376**		
Missing	8		2.1
Predominance of Discipline* **			
Female-Dominated (70% or more female)	1	0.3	0.3
Integrated	294	76.6	76.6
Male-Dominated (70% or more male)	89	23.2	23.2
N	**384**		
Missing	0		0.0
Perceived Predominance in Department			
Female-Dominated (70% or more female)	39	10.3	10.2
Integrated	212	56.2	55.2
Male-Dominated (70% or more male)	126	33.4	32.8
N	**377**		
Missing	7		1.8

**Includes respondents with missing data in denominator*

***All respondents reporting anything other than white*

**** Based on* (Equality Challenge Unit, 2015b)

Appendix G: Semi-Structured Interview Schedules

Remuneration Policy Shapers Interview Schedule

Expository: Thanks very much for agreeing to speak with me today. Before we begin, may I just confirm as discussed via email that you do/do not consent for me to record this interview? The purpose of recording is only to allow me to conduct a complete analysis on the information you share with me.…Thank you. **I am now/not recording**.

As discussed, I am researching the pay discussion culture faced by academics working in UK higher education. Please be assured that your identity and employer will remain anonymous and confidential on all materials produced from this interview and throughout my research process.

The specific purpose of this interview is to discuss the role you feel that remuneration policies at this university play in shaping the pay discussion culture faced by academics working here.

I will ask reasonably broad questions at first and provide occasional follow up questions to understand your perspective more comprehensively. You may ask me for clarification at any time and may of course decline to answer any question. Today's interview should take approximately one hour, and again I truly appreciate your time!

Topic 1: Icebreaker into the Realm of the Income-talk taboo

1. **Before we get into specifics, I'd like you to consider a hypothetical situation. Imagine that tomorrow a colleague comes to your office with pleasant news. They have been offered a new academic post, and they want your advice on whether the salary figure on the table is a good deal. How would you respond?**

Probe: How does this situation make you feel?
Probe: Does it make a difference if the person is junior, at a comparable level or senior to you?
Probe: Does it make a difference whether this is a promotion here or a post elsewhere?
Probe: Has anything like this ever actually happened to you?
Probe: If no questions about pay, what about promotion?
Probe: Are their certain types of people you would be more or less likely to provide advice?
Probe: Do you think this kind of thing occurs frequently here?

Topic 2: University Pay Transparency Policies and Pay Secrecy Culture

2. **A female academic recently told me that her department head and HR officers have reacted with shock on several occasions when she tried to question specific pay disparities that she had learned of, which appeared to affect her. She told me was made to feel like she had done something wrong by discussing pay with others. Would you be surprised if an academic had this experience here?**

Prompt: Does this university have any formal policy regarding academic staff discussions of pay internally; or externally?

Prompt: Does the university encourage pay discussion it? Discourage it? Silent on the issue?
Prompt: What about for elements of pay beyond basic pay? Exceptional duty allowances, market supplements, other incentives for moving to a new university?
Prompt: Are there informal policy or 'professional' expectations around pay discussion?
Prompt: Do you think academics discuss pay with each other at this university?
Prompt: What sort of pay transparency does the university actively create here? Internally? Externally? **Equal Pay Audit/Review?**
Prompt: Does this transparency extend to the bonus scheme? Promotions? Professorial review outcomes by gender and ethnicity?

3. **Thinking about any policies (or lack of policies) on pay transparency here, can you describe any policy reforms that this university has made in recent years?**

Prompt: Have UK statutory changes spurred any related reforms here?
Prompt: This might involve reporting of pay gaps by protected characteristics, like sex or race?
Prompt: In April 2011, the Public Sector Equality Duty went into effect, replacing previous specific equality duties. Part of compliance requires transparency and publication of evidence that duty is being upheld. Has the university's response to the PSED had an impact on pay transparency here?
Prompt: In October 2010, a clause in the Equality Act 2010 made enforcing pay secrecy clauses unenforceable if employees suspect illegal discrimination. This university probably did not have pay secrecy clauses in contracts anyway, but do you think the university may have taken any action to promote awareness of this new right among academic staff?
Prompt: Have legal actions spurred any related reforms here?
Prompt: Has this reform been achieved?
Prompt: Was there a concern for fairness related to this reform? In what way? What did that look like? (For women? BAME people? Junior staff?)

4. **Has the process of gaining and maintaining an institutional Athena SWAN award led to any changes in the university's pay transparency environment?**

Prompt: In terms of reporting?
Prompt: In terms of policy?
Prompt: How does the university report Athena SWAN activity to academic staff?

5. **How does this university engage with or respond to the Times Higher Education pay survey publication of institutional level gender pay gap data?**

Prompt: Reference the relevant university charts of their GPG against UK wide GPG **[University GPG Comparison Charts against UK GPG)**.

Prompt: Does the university communicate anything about the THE pay survey to staff? How? Why not?
Prompt: Can you describe other ways the university communicates about trends in the gender pay gap among academic staff here?
Prompt: Do you think the university plans to take further action to narrow the gender pay gap, as

discussed in the 2016/17 national pay settlement?
Prompt: What about pay disparities between BAME and white academic staff?

6. **Thinking about the culture around pay transparency here, would you describe any culture shift that you think has taken place at this university in recent years?**

Prompt: This is about informal practices. Do you think academic staff are more open with each other about pay than they used to be?
Prompt: Why do you think the culture has shifted or not?
Prompt: Is this shift (or lack of one) good for the university?
Prompt: Do you think there may be some groups of academic staff who would feel differently to you? What groups?

Topic 3: University Pay Policy (Pay Scale, Market/Retention Supplements, Bonuses/Performance Awards, Allowances, Promotions, Professorial Review)

7. **Do you believe that knowledge of colleagues' pay could help a member of academic staff here ensure they are being remunerated fairly?**

Prompt: Can you elaborate on that answer?
Prompt: Would your answer change if you were comparing professors and academics who had not yet become professors?
Prompt: Would your answer change if you were comparing research only staff, teaching only staff and teaching and research staff?
Prompt: Do you think function of remuneration policies here make knowledge of colleagues' pay particularly useful or useless? These policies might refer to the pay scale itself, market and retention supplements, bonuses or performance awards or special allowances.
Prompt: Does the university have any sense of distribution of things like market supplements, bonuses/performance rewards, or particularly acting up or additional duties allowances? (by discipline, gender, ethnic background, seniority)
Prompt: Do you think academic staff here are clear about what type of work attracts an acting up or additional duties allowance?
Prompt: On a related note, do you know if departments typically request applicants prior salary history? Why or why not? What happens to that information?

8. **Do you believe that knowledge of colleagues' promotion experiences could help a member of academic staff here ensure they are being advanced fairly?**

Prompt: Would your answer change if you were comparing professors and academics who had not yet become professors?
Prompt: Would your answer change if you were comparing research only staff, teaching only staff and teaching and research staff?
Prompt: Do you think the function of promotion policies here make knowledge of colleagues promotion experiences particularly useful or useless? These policies might refer to academic promotion or the professorial review process.

Prompt: Does this university facilitate any mentorship programmes in order to encourage certain groups toward promotion?

UCU Committee Members Interview Schedule

Expository: Thanks very much for agreeing to speak with me today. Before we begin, may I just confirm as discussed via email that you do/do not consent for me to record this interview? The purpose of recording is only to allow me to conduct a complete analysis on the information you share with me.…Thank you. **I am now/not recording**.

As discussed, I am researching the pay discussion culture faced by academics working in UK higher education. Please be assured that your identity and employer will remain anonymous and confidential on all materials produced from this interview and throughout my research process.

The specific purpose of this interview is to discuss the trade union perspective on the role that management and remuneration policies at this university place in shaping pay discussion culture faced by academics working here.

I will ask reasonably broad questions at first and provide occasional follow up questions to understand your perspective more comprehensively. You may ask me for clarification at any time and may of course decline to answer any question. Today's interview should take approximately one hour, and again I truly appreciate your time!

Topic 1: Icebreaker into the Realm of the Income-talk taboo

1. **Before we get into specifics, I'd like you to consider a hypothetical situation. Imagine that tomorrow a colleague comes to your office with pleasant news. They have been offered anew academic post, and they want your advice on whether the salary figure on the table is a good deal. How would you respond?**

Probe: How does this situation make you feel?
Probe: Does it make a difference if the person is junior, at a comparable level or senior to you?
Probe: Does it make a difference whether this is a promotion here or a post elsewhere?
Probe: Has anything like this ever actually happened to you?
Probe: Are their certain types of people you would be more or less likely to provide advice?
Probe: Do you think this kind of thing occurs frequently here?

Topic 2: University Pay Transparency Policies and Pay Secrecy Culture

2. **A female academic recently told me that her department head and HR officers have reacted with shock on several occasions when she tried to question specific pay disparities she had learned of that appeared to affect her. She said she was made to feel like she had done something bad by discussing pay with others. As a UCU committee member, would you be surprised if an academic had this experience here?**

Prompt: Are you aware if this university has any formal policy regarding academic staff discussions of pay internally; or externally?
Prompt: Does the university encourage pay discussion? Discourage it? Silent on the issue?
Prompt: Do you perceive any informal policy or 'professional' expectations around pay discussion?
Prompt: Do you think other academics discuss pay with each other at this university?
Prompt: Are you aware of active creation of pay transparency by this university? Internally? Externally?

3. **Thinking about any policies (or lack of policies) on pay transparency here, can you describe any policy reform campaigns that this UCU branch has led here recent years?**

Prompt: Have legal actions spurred any related UCU campaigns?
Prompt: Have UK statutory changes spurred any related UCU campaigns?
Prompt: In April 2011, the Public Sector Equality Duty went into effect, replacing previous specific equality duties. Part of compliance requires transparency and publication of evidence that duty is being upheld. Does the UCU feel the university's response to the PSED had an impact on pay transparency here?
Prompt: In October 2010, a clause in the Equality Act 2010 made enforcing pay secrecy clauses unenforceable if employees suspect illegal discrimination. This university probably did not have pay secrecy clauses in contracts anyway, but has the UCU taken any action to promote awareness of this new right among academic staff?
Prompt: Was there a concern for fairness related to this campaign? In what way? What did that look like? (For women? BAME people? Junior staff?)
Prompt: Has the university been responsive to these campaigns?
Prompt: Have these campaigns been successful?

4. **As you may know, this university was awarded an institutional Athena SWAN award in 2008/2010. Does the UCU feel that the process of gaining and maintaining an institutional Athena SWAN award has led to any changes in the university's pay transparency environment?**

Prompt: In terms of reporting?
Prompt: In terms of policy?
Prompt: How does the university report Athena SWAN activity to academic staff?
Prompt: Does UCU communicate with members about Athena SWAN activity?

5. **What (if anything) has this UCU branch has done to engage with or respond to the Times Higher Education pay survey publication of institutional level gender pay gap data?**

Prompt: Reference the relevant university charts of their GPG against UK wide GPG **(University GPG Comparison Charts against UK GPG)**.
Prompt: Does this UCU branch communicate anything about the THE pay survey to members? How? Why not?

Prompt: Can you describe other ways this UCU branch communicates about trends in the gender pay gap among academic staff here?
Prompt: Do you think the university plans to take further action to narrow the gender pay gap, as offered in the 2016/17 national pay settlement talks?
Prompt: Rate for Pay website?
Prompt: What about pay disparities between BAME and white academic staff?

6. **Thinking about the culture around pay transparency here, would you describe any culture shift that the UCU feels has taken place here in recent years?**

Prompt: This is about informal practices. Do you think academic staff are more open with each other about pay than they used to be?
Prompt: Why do you think the culture has shifted or not?
Prompt: Is this shift (or lack of one) good for the university?
Prompt: Do you think there may be some groups of academic staff who would feel differently about this? What groups?

Topic 3: University Pay Policy (Pay Scale, Market/Retention Supplements, Bonuses/Performance Awards, Allowances, Promotions, Professorial Review)

7. **Do you believe that knowledge of colleagues' pay could help a member of academic staff here ensure they are being remunerated fairly?**

Prompt: Can you elaborate on that answer?
Prompt: Would your answer change if you were comparing professors and academics who had not yet become professors?
Prompt: Would your answer change if you were comparing research only staff, teaching only staff and teaching and research staff?
Prompt: Do you think function of remuneration policies here make knowledge of colleagues' pay particularly useful or useless? These policies might refer to the pay scale itself, market and retention supplements, bonuses or performance awards or special allowances.
Prompt: Does the university have any sense of distribution of things like market supplements, bonuses/performance rewards, or particularly acting up or additional duties allowances? (by discipline, gender, ethnic background, seniority)
Prompt: Do you think academic staff here are clear about what type of work attracts an acting up or additional duties allowance?
Prompt: On a related note, do you know if departments typically request applicants prior salary history? Why or why not? What happens to that information?

8. **Do you believe that knowledge of colleagues' promotion experiences could help a member of academic staff here ensure they are being advanced fairly?**

Prompt: Would your answer change if you were comparing professors and academics who had not yet become professors?

Prompt: Would your answer change if you were comparing research only staff, teaching only staff and teaching and research staff?
Prompt: Do you think the function of promotion policies here make knowledge of colleagues' promotion experiences particularly useful or useless? These policies might refer to academic promotion or the professorial review process.
Prompt: Does this university facilitate any mentorship programmes in order to encourage certain groups toward promotion?

Academic Staff Interview Schedule

Expository: Thanks very much for agreeing to speak with me today. Before we begin, may I just confirm as discussed via email that you do/do not consent for me to record this interview? The purpose of recording is only to allow me to conduct a complete analysis on the information you share with me.…Thank you. **I am now/not recording**.

As discussed, I am researching the pay discussion culture faced by academics working in UK higher education. Please be assured that your identity and employer will remain anonymous and confidential on all materials produced from this interview and throughout my research process.

The specific purpose of this interview is to help me gain a better sense of how you feel about discussing pay with your colleagues (or not), what those behaviours look like, what factors you feel shape your behaviour, and what impact they may have for you. If you feel there is a taboo against discussing pay in your workplace, why do you think that is?

I will ask reasonably broad questions at first and provide occasional follow up questions to understand your perspective more comprehensively. You may ask me for clarification at any time and may of course decline to answer any question. Today's interview should take approximately one hour, and again I truly appreciate your time!

Individual Details: *(Get these from survey response unless interviewee did not complete survey or anything is unclear. In that case, ask these questions quickly before start of interview. Always confirm current job title of all respondents before beginning interview)*

Confirm:

- **job title:**
- contract status (FT/PT):
- contract type (FTC/OE):
- job function (research and/or teaching):
- **UCU member (y/n):**
- **highest degree:**
- length of service at this university and in HE as an academic (years):
- gender (f/m):
- ethnicity (white/BAME):
- parent (y/n):
- Applied for a job in the past 12 months (y/n):

- intended vote party if GE tomorrow:

Topic 1: Icebreaker into the Realm of the Income-talk taboo

1. **Before we get into specifics, I'd like you to consider a hypothetical situation. Imagine that tomorrow a colleague comes to your office with pleasant news. They have been offered a new academic post, and they want your advice on whether the salary figure on the table is a good deal. How would you respond?**

Probe: How does this situation make you feel?

Probe: Does it make a difference if the person is junior, at a comparable level or senior to you?

Probe: Does it make a difference whether this is a promotion here or a post elsewhere?

Probe: Has anything like this ever actually happened to you?

Probe: Are their certain types of people you would be more or less likely to provide advice?

Probe: Do you think this kind of thing occurs frequently here?

Topic 2: University Pay Secrecy Policies and Pay Secrecy Culture

2. **(IF HEAD OF SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT): As department head, I suspect you may have a unique perspective on pay across this department at least. When you became the head and gained knowledge of the pay of all the academics in your department, did anything surprise you?**

Prompt: Were pay levels of your colleagues pretty similar to what you were expecting?

Prompt: Do you remember noticing any colleagues whose pay was much higher or lower than you thought it would have been?

Prompt: Did the pay data you received make it possible for you to easily connect colleagues' pay with their demographic data, like gender or ethnicity?

3. **A female academic recently told me that her department head and HR officers have reacted with shock on several occasions when she tried to question specific pay disparities that she had learned of, which appeared to affect her negatively. She told me she was made to feel like she had done something wrong by discussing pay with others. Would you be surprised if an academic from your department had this experience?**

Prompt: (IF HEAD OF SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT): Do you ever try to evaluate or take action to correct pay disparities within your department in your capacity as head? Have you had any contact with the remuneration committee about pay disparities in your department?

Prompt: This particularly female was also white. Do you think there may be a different experience for a BME academic, or a BME female academic at this university?

Prompt: Do you think someone from another department at this university might feel differently?

Prompt: Are you aware if this university has any formal policy regarding academic staff discussions of pay internally; or externally? Or your department?

Prompt: Do you perceive any informal policy or 'professional' expectations around pay discussion?

Prompt: What messages do you get from the university leadership? From your head of school?

Prompt: Do you think other academics discuss pay with each other in your department? Beyond your department?

Prompt: Are you aware of active creation of pay transparency by this university or your department? Internally? Externally?

Prompt: What about the UCU? Does the UCU present a different expectation than the university or your department? How so?

4. **Can you tell me about a time you have discussed pay with one of your colleagues here?**

Prompt: If this has never happened, has there been a time you considered discussing pay but felt you couldn't, or a time someone wanted to discuss pay with you and you didn't want to engage?

Prompt: What do you feel motivated your behaviour?

Prompt: What did you hope to gain or protect?

Prompt: What were the other people involved like? Close friends? junior/senior colleagues? same/different gender? ethnicity?

Prompt: Would you consult the UCU for support with these type of conversations?

Prompt: Did anything change because of your conversation?

Prompt: What about discussing pay with colleagues from other institutions?

5. **Can you describe for me the sort of people you think you would most be willing to discuss pay with, if ever?**

Prompt: This can be beyond this university.

Prompt: Sex, ethnicity, job level of these individuals?

Prompt: **(IF A UCU MEMBER):** Other UCU members, officers?

Prompt: Or the sort of situations where you would be most comfortable discussing pay?

Prompt: **(IF A PARENT):** Does being a parent affect these decisions in any way?

6. **Can you describe for me the sort of people you think you would be least willing or never willing to discuss pay with?**

Prompt: This can be beyond this university.

Prompt: Sex, ethnicity, job level of these individuals?

Prompt: Or the sort of situations where you would be least comfortable discussing pay?

Prompt: **(IF A PARENT):** Does being a parent affect these decisions in any way?

7. **How would you describe the fairness of pay in this department?**

Prompt: What makes you feel this way?

Prompt: What sort of people do would you compare yourself with to determine this?

Prompt: Does information shared or withheld by the university or your department affect your opinion? How?

Prompt: There are websites that allow you to benchmark your own pay against others in similar jobs to you (Glassdoor, Emolument, UCU Rate for Job). Have you ever heard of these? Used them?

Prompt: What would you do if you learned that your pay appeared to be unfair?

Prompt: Do you ever have concerns about compliance with legal employment anti-discrimination policies here?

Prompt: Have you considered leaving this university due to this issue?

8. **Does the Times Higher Education Pay Survey ever come into conversations here?**

Prompt: If no, briefly explain and continue. These bar charts show the GPG for all full-time academic staff and professors here and across all UK universities based on that survey [Show relevant university graphs from **[University GPG Comparison Charts against UK GPG].**

Prompt: Can you imagine people around here being interested in this sort of report?

Prompt: Why/why not?

9. **Do you feel that the process of gaining and maintaining an institutional Athena SWAN award led to any changes in pay transparency here?**

Prompt: Do you feel the university addresses pay transparency through the Athena SWAN process?

Prompt: How so?/Why not?

Prompt: (If department holds Athena SWAN accreditation or has/is applied/ying): Do you feel the processes of gaining and maintaining a departmental Athena SWAN award has led to any changes in your department's pay transparency environment?

Topic 3: University Pay Policy (Pay Scale, Market/Retention Supplements, Bonuses/Performance Awards, Allowances, Promotions, Professorial Review)

10. **Do you believe that knowledge of colleagues' pay could help you ensure that you are being remunerated fairly here?**

Prompt: Has this ever happened to you?

Prompt: Can knowledge of colleagues' pay from other institutions help you here?

Prompt: Do you think function of remuneration policies here make knowledge of colleagues' pay particularly useful or useless? These policies might refer to the pay scale itself, market and retention supplements, bonuses or performance awards or special allowances.

Prompt: Have you discussed pay in the context of some of these processes?

Prompt: Do you feel you know what type of work attracts an acting up or additional duties allowance?

Prompt: Is the guidance you receive to understand remuneration policies clear and easily accessible?

Prompt: Who does this guidance come from? The UCU? Line manager? HR?

Prompt: Can this lack of transparency be fixed?

Prompt: On a related note, did you have to provide your prior salary history or level when applying to this university? What do you think happens to that information?

11. **Do you believe that knowledge of colleagues' promotion experiences could help you ensure that you are being advanced fairly here?**

Prompt: Has this ever happened to you?

Prompt: Can knowledge of promotion experiences of colleagues from other institutions help you here?

Prompt: Do you think the function of promotion policies here make knowledge of colleagues' promotion experiences particularly useful or useless? These policies might refer to academic promotion or the professorial review process.

Prompt: What gets people promoted around here?

Prompt: Is the guidance you receive to understand promotion policies clear and easily accessible?

Prompt: Who does this guidance come from? The UCU? Line manager? HR?

Prompt: Can this lack of transparency be fixed?

Prompt: Do you know about any mentorship programmes that could help encourage you toward promotion?

Appendix H: Qualitative Coding Tree

- THEME 1: Data Transparency
    - CONCEPT: Visibility of Organisational Inequality and Organisational Restriction
        - CATEGORY: Equal Pay Audit
            - CHARACTERISATION: Leads to Substantive Change
            - CHARACTERISATION: Does Not Lead to Substantive Change
        - CATEGORY: PSED Compliance
            - CHARACTERISATION: Leads to Substantive Change
            - CHARACTERISATION: Does Not Lead to Substantive Change
        - CATEGORY: Staff Diversity Data
            - CHARACTERISATION: Leads to Substantive Change
            - CHARACTERISATION: Does Not Lead to Substantive Change

- THEME 2: External Recognition
    - CONCEPT: Legitimacy of Inequality and External Communication
        - CATEGORY: Branding/Public Image
            - CHARACTERISATION: Leads to Substantive Change
            - CHARACTERISATION: Does Not Lead to Substantive Change
        - CATEGORY: Athena SWAN
            - CHARACTERISATION: Leads to Substantive Change
            - CHARACTERISATION: Does Not Lead to Substantive Change
        - CATEGORY: Race Equality Charter
            - CHARACTERISATION: Leads to Substantive Change
            - CHARACTERISATION: Does Not Lead to Substantive Change

- THEME 3: Informal Pay Secrecy Norms
    - CONCEPT: Management's Control over Employee Compliance with Inequalities and Employee Restriction
        - CATEGORY: Perception of Pay Secrecy Norm
            - CHARACTERISATION: Open
            - CHARACTERISATION: Closed
        - CATEGORY: Experience of Pay Secrecy Norm
            - CHARACTERISATION: Open
            - CHARACTERISATION: Closed

- THEME 4: Bureaucratic Processes and Policy
    - CONCEPT: Processes that Produce Inequality and Procedural Communication
        - CATEGORY: Professorial Pay
            - CHARACTERISATION: Clear
            - CHARACTERISATION: Unclear
        - CATEGORY: Pay Rise for Promotion
            - CHARACTERISATION: Clear
            - CHARACTERISATION: Unclear
        - CATEGORY: Recruitment Pay Levels
            - CHARACTERISATION: Clear

        - CHARACTERISATION: Unclear
    - CATEGORY: Promotion Process
        - CHARACTERISATION: Clear
        - CHARACTERISATION: Unclear
    - CATEGORY: Unspoken Norms
        - CHARACTERISATION: Clear
        - CHARACTERISATION: Unclear

- FREE NODES: UCU Activity
- FREE NODES: HR Disorder/Distrust

Appendix I: HESA Analysis Tables

GENDER PAY GAP and BAME PAY GAP

Nominal Mean Annual Basic Salary				
Year	BAME	White	Female	Male
2003/04	£31,930.61	£36,399.45	£32,290.19	£37,509.15
2004/05	£32,561.22	£37,161.13	£32,923.09	£38,387.61
2005/06	£34,962.81	£39,608.77	£35,236.47	£40,932.38
2006/07	£36,771.21	£41,774.27	£37,308.47	£43,176.34
2007/08	£38,755.34	£44,186.74	£39,460.87	£45,585.02
2008/09	£41,843.67	£47,396.03	£42,602.53	£48,725.86
2009/10	£42,380.92	£47,781.44	£43,020.36	£49,146.28
2010/11	£42,749.78	£47,967.97	£43,421.12	£49,358.09
2011/12	£43,246.65	£48,231.54	£43,838.90	£49,684.43
2012/13	£43,797.91	£48,626.73	£44,356.97	£50,080.62
2013/14	£44,406.41	£49,191.09	£44,942.74	£50,557.87
2014/15	£44,937.41	£49,818.16	£45,619.99	£51,146.50
2015/16	£45,133.68	£50,095.36	£46,068.56	£51,359.18

Source: Author's analysis of HESA Staff Record 2003/04-2015/16

Nominal Mean Annual Basic Salary Gaps		
Year	BAME Gap	GPG
2003/04	12.3%	13.9%
2004/05	12.4%	14.2%
2005/06	11.7%	13.9%
2006/07	12.0%	13.6%
2007/08	12.3%	13.4%
2008/09	11.7%	12.6%
2009/10	11.3%	12.5%
2010/11	10.9%	12.0%
2011/12	10.3%	11.8%
2012/13	9.9%	11.4%
2013/14	9.7%	11.1%
2014/15	9.8%	10.8%
2015/16	9.9%	10.3%

Source: Author's analysis of HESA Staff Record 2003/04-2015/16

Nominal Median Annual Basic Salary				
Year	BAME	White	Female	Male
2003/04	£29,478.00	£35,233.00	£31,715.00	£35,367.00
2004/05	£30,363.00	£35,883.00	£32,666.00	£36,428.00
2005/06	£32,490.00	£37,521.00	£34,448.00	£37,643.00
2006/07	£33,825.00	£38,772.00	£36,546.00	£39,493.00
2007/08	£35,837.00	£41,496.00	£38,019.00	£41,545.00
2008/09	£38,757.00	£43,811.00	£41,118.00	£44,930.00
2009/10	£39,300.00	£44,118.00	£42,563.00	£45,155.00
2010/11	£40,120.00	£44,025.50	£42,733.00	£45,336.00
2011/12	£40,430.00	£44,561.00	£42,907.00	£45,486.00
2012/13	£40,834.00	£44,607.00	£43,312.00	£45,941.00
2013/14	£41,002.00	£45,053.00	£43,745.00	£46,400.00
2014/15	£40,847.00	£45,954.00	£43,434.00	£45,980.00
2015/16	£41,255.00	£46,414.00	£43,758.00	£46,414.00

Source: Author's analysis of HESA Staff Record 2003/04-2015/16

Nominal Median Annual Basic Salary Gaps		
Year	BAME Gap	GPG
2003/04	16.3%	10.3%
2004/05	15.4%	10.3%
2005/06	13.4%	8.5%
2006/07	12.8%	7.5%
2007/08	13.6%	8.5%
2008/09	11.5%	8.5%
2009/10	10.9%	5.7%
2010/11	8.9%	5.7%
2011/12	9.3%	5.7%
2012/13	8.5%	5.7%
2013/14	9.0%	5.7%
2014/15	11.1%	5.5%
2015/16	11.1%	5.7%

Source: Author's analysis of HESA Staff Record 2003/04-2015/16

INTERSECTIONAL GENDER/BAME PAY GAP

Nominal Mean Annual Basic Salary				
Year	BAME Male	BAME Female	White Male	White Female
2003/04	£33,046.43	£29,649.56	£38,342.35	£32,878.99
2004/05	£33,849.08	£30,035.39	£39,242.75	£33,558.24
2005/06	£36,302.02	£32,391.50	£41,803.70	£35,887.81
2006/07	£38,115.23	£34,228.96	£44,110.33	£37,879.02
2007/08	£40,131.64	£36,186.08	£46,647.73	£40,144.37
2008/09	£43,247.05	£39,282.39	£49,917.88	£43,353.87
2009/10	£43,818.44	£39,826.08	£50,343.74	£43,776.50
2010/11	£44,235.17	£40,143.03	£50,468.72	£44,109.79
2011/12	£44,734.44	£40,682.17	£50,704.76	£44,470.11
2012/13	£45,372.92	£41,149.26	£51,046.78	£44,996.20
2013/14	£45,948.90	£41,783.10	£51,590.60	£45,636.86
2014/15	£46,359.48	£42,524.31	£52,243.77	£46,311.80
2015/16	£46,421.59	£42,975.64	£52,459.94	£46,730.43

Source: Author's analysis of HESA Staff Record 2003/04-2015/16

Nominal Mean Annual Basic Salary Gaps			
Year	BAME Male Gap	BAME Female Gap	White Female Gap
2003/04	13.8%	22.7%	14.2%
2004/05	13.7%	23.5%	14.5%
2005/06	13.2%	22.5%	14.2%
2006/07	13.6%	22.4%	14.1%
2007/08	14.0%	22.4%	13.9%
2008/09	13.4%	21.3%	13.1%
2009/10	13.0%	20.9%	13.0%
2010/11	12.4%	20.5%	12.6%
2011/12	11.8%	19.8%	12.3%
2012/13	11.1%	19.4%	11.9%
2013/14	10.9%	19.0%	11.5%
2014/15	11.3%	18.6%	11.4%
2015/16	11.5%	18.1%	10.9%

Source: Author's analysis of HESA Staff Record 2003/04-2015/16

Nominal Median Annual Basic Salary				
Year	BAME Male	BAME Female	White Male	White Female
2003/04	£31,090.00	£28,279.00	£35,367.00	£33,230.00
2004/05	£31,720.00	£29,128.00	£36,428.00	£34,227.00
2005/06	£33,646.00	£30,607.00	£38,343.00	£35,482.00
2006/07	£35,396.00	£32,471.00	£39,935.00	£37,413.00
2007/08	£36,911.00	£34,723.00	£41,545.00	£39,159.00
2008/09	£39,920.00	£37,651.00	£44,956.00	£42,701.00
2009/10	£41,152.00	£37,839.00	£45,437.00	£43,767.50
2010/11	£41,489.00	£37,990.00	£45,336.00	£44,016.00
2011/12	£41,639.00	£38,140.00	£45,486.00	£44,166.00
2012/13	£42,055.00	£38,522.00	£45,941.00	£44,607.00
2013/14	£42,476.00	£38,907.00	£46,400.00	£45,053.00
2014/15	£42,067.00	£39,685.00	£47,328.00	£45,954.00
2015/16	£41,979.00	£40,082.00	£47,801.00	£45,066.00

Source: Author's analysis of HESA Staff Record 2003/04-2015/16

Nominal Median Annual Basic Salary Gaps			
Year	BAME Male Gap	BAME Female Gap	White Female Gap
2003/04	12.1%	20.0%	6.0%
2004/05	12.9%	20.0%	6.0%
2005/06	12.2%	20.2%	7.5%
2006/07	11.4%	18.7%	6.3%
2007/08	11.2%	16.4%	5.7%
2008/09	11.2%	16.2%	5.0%
2009/10	9.4%	16.7%	3.7%
2010/11	8.5%	16.2%	2.9%
2011/12	8.5%	16.2%	2.9%
2012/13	8.5%	16.1%	2.9%
2013/14	8.5%	16.1%	2.9%
2014/15	11.1%	16.1%	2.9%
2015/16	12.2%	16.1%	5.7%

Source: Author's analysis of HESA Staff Record 2003/04-2015/16

Appendix J: Binomial Logistic Regression Results for Reported Pay Discussion Behaviour (with University Beta Dummy Variable)

	No Model	Model 1
Constant	1.235 (0.109)	0.200 (1.176)
Age		0.987 (0.017)
Doctorate		3.409 (0.476)**
JobFunction		0.873 (0.311)
Professor		3.568 (0.389)***
UCUmember		2.141 (0.265)***
FullTimeEmployment		1.361 (0.513)
JobApp12		1.388 (0.291)
Sex		1.248 (0.253)
ContractType		1.040 (0.336)
Parent		0.775 (0.262)
SETdiscipline		0.702 (0.269)
BAME		0.951 (0.346)
UKID		0.792 (0.253)
VoteIntent (Reference: Conservative)		
Green		2.139 (0.557)
Labour		3.288 (0.466)**
Liberal Democrat		3.297 (0.500)**
Other		2.615 (0.668)
Would Not Vote		1.005 (0.634)
University Beta Dummy		0.806 (0.289)
Pseudo R^2 (Cox & Snell R^2)		0.163
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke R)		0.218
Percentage correctly predicted	55.3	64.6
N	342	342

*NB: Table reports the odds ratios, which are reported as Exp[B] (standard errors in parentheses). *p< 0.1. **p < 0.05. ***p < 0*

Appendix K: Forthcoming GPG Reporting Analysis

Dr Aneeta Rattan presented unpublished content coding analysis of GPG report narratives published by 241 of the FTSE 350 companies at the Global Institute for Women's Leadership event in London—Gender Pay Gap Reporting Year 1: What have we learned?—in April 2019. Based on narratives released along with the first year of reporting, her analysis of problem identification and action plans exhibited by these large private-sector companies suggested that while the most common explanation for the GPG was vertical segregation, most of the solutions did not aim to address the senior staffing problem. In other words, despite identifying that a lot of the GPG was attributable to hierarchical power imbalances within the organisations, most of the solutions (not surprisingly) did not seek to challenge and re-align power within the organisations. Publication of this analysis is planned following Dr Rattan's analysis of Year 2 narratives.

Appendix L: Problematic GPG Narratives by Universities with Narrowed Gaps

Among institutions highlighted by the THE as having made the most progress in narrowing their gap, University of Falmouth and Queen Mary University of London (Pells, 2019), it is not entirely clear from reading their second year GPG reporting narratives that anything about the hierarchical power imbalances or structures supporting them have changed. Although further explanations are given, the justifications that both institutions placed first in their narratives suggest no change or a worsening structural reform.

Falmouth's first explanation also simply pertained to calculation changes. The institution had outsourced a number of non-academic staffing so was no longer required to include them in their calculation:

> Falmouth University has established a joint venture with the University of Exeter to deliver a wide range of services including residences, estates, facilities, library services, IT, and student services. As a result, a significant number of critical staff are reported independently as Falmouth Exeter Plus, and aren't included in Falmouth University's statistics." (Falmouth University, 2019)

This could suggest a worsening of conditions for staff excluded from the figures. A joint statement by the UCU and GMB unions roundly condemned the creation of this venture—Falmouth Exeter Plus (FX Plus) when it was initially being considered. They expressed concern that it would result in degradation of pay, including removing alignment with the Framework Agreement (Chapter 4), and conditions, such as annual leave (Grove, 2013b, 2015a).[101]

Queen Mary explained that they have since determined that the data they reported under their statutory duty in 2018 was inaccurate:

> In preparing for the 2018 gender pay gap data, we have put in place a more robust process for improved data quality for reporting. Interrogation of the gender pay gap data from 2017 highlighted some anomalies which resulted in overinflated figures being reported last year. The outcome of this is a significant drop in the size of the pay gap for 2018 compared with 2017. We are confident that the figures extracted this year are an accurate reflection of our gender pay gap as at 31 March 2018. (Queen Mary University of London, 2019, p. 4)

[101] Although again beyond the scope of this thesis, an aspect of casualisation is also raised in Falmouth's narrative. The report notes: "Offering employment opportunities to our student population is important to us and in order to facilitate this we have established Falmouth Agency Ltd as the vehicle through which we manage this employment relationship. Whilst there is no requirement to publish results for this entity we have analysed the data and this shows a 0% gender pay gap on a mean and median basis alongside no bonuses being paid to any individual within the group," (Falmouth University, 2019). However, in the absence of reporting on the pay levels, this, even if accurate, does not assuage the unions' concern about creating second-tier employment with lower pay, weaker benefits, and lack of access to collective bargaining.

Whilst improving data accuracy is useful, it does not indicate action to reform organisational inequality. If nothing else, these reports highlight a considerable problem of comparability. If the data cannot be calculated on the same basis year-on-year due to frequent changes made by the university, trends cannot be meaningfully interpreted in order to understand changing experiences. Furthermore, Queen Mary's result chimes with the considerable frustration about access to reliable data expressed by UCU representatives in both case studies of this thesis (Chapter 8), which is surprising given the pressure under which UK universities have been placed for years to perform the pay 'transparency agenda' (Chapter 4).

Appendix M: Research Impact Record and Future Plans

During the first year of my PhD, I contributed to international legislative dialogue by supporting the development of the Women and Work Research Group of the Business School at Sydney University's submission to an Australian Senate inquiry into proposed legislation the Fair Work Amendment (Gender Pay Gap) Bill 2015. The bill would have protected the right of Australian employees to discuss their pay without fear of employer retaliation, with similar but stronger language than section 77 of the UK's Equality Act 2010. I provided insights on the income-talk taboo and policy knowledge about the limitations of UK legislation on pay transparency (Baird, Heron and Women, 2016).[102]

During the third year of my PhD, I contributed to a BBC newsbeat article encouraging young people to negotiate their pay at work. I raised an important counter narrative to victim-blaming rhetoric suggesting that the GPG is partly due to women's flawed negotiating tactics, the societal barriers and stereotypes women face when they engage in similar negotiating behaviour (BBC Newsbeat, 2018). This was generated from my engagement with recent pay negotiation literature (Babcock and Laschever, 2009; Artz, Goodall and Oswald, 2018).

In the same year, I also provided voluntary advice and networking connections to support an investigative critique by Screenhouse Productions, Ltd. of the UK's current mandatory GPG reporting regulations (Equality Act 2010) for an episode of Dispatches, Channel 4's award-winning investigative current affairs programme, which corresponded with the April 2018 reporting deadline of these regulations. The show demonstrated the risk that the pay 'transparency agenda' could fail to deliver genuine transparency. By creating a fake company that posed to newly developed consultants advising companies on the new regulations, the programme revealed indications that some companies were seeking out technically legally loopholes to evade intended scrutiny of the reporting, such as restructuring the company into smaller chunks to evade the 250 employee reporting threshold altogether (Burge, 2018).

During the final year of my PhD, I was invited by the Royal Holloway University and College Union's branch committee to speak about my PhD research findings at an 'Equalities Tea(ch)-in' in July 2019. The diverse audience included a mixture of academics, students, an Equality, Diversity & Inclusion professional and several members of the institution's council. Therefore, this provided an

[102] Unfortunately, the bill has not become law, having lapsed at the end of the Parliament in July 2019 (Parliament of Australia, 2019). Impact, like research, is often an iterative process.

opportunity to illustrate the real experiences of the silence of transparency to a relevant audience, drawing on materials from one of my two case studies that were used in Chapters 8 and 9.

I plan to engage in at least three future actions, along with developing the work of this thesis into published materials. First, I plan to seek effective coverage of my work in the THE. To confirm that the THE Pay Survey has been published since at least 2007, I corresponded with THE journalist who has written some of the associated articles, John Morgan. In addition to confirming facts with him, I was able to secure his interest in the subject of my research. He encouraged me to get in touch when I publish my research, as it would be relevant for THE coverage. In order to maximise impact from THE coverage of my research, I would like to work with a journalist to distribute publication of my research (whether in article or monograph form) to a number of UK VCs for comment to be included in a THE article. Apart from the value of a THE article in disseminating my findings in an easily digestible way to the industry, this would also create a cohort of powerful university leaders who might begin to consider my work and their comments might create something to which union branches could hold them accountable to generate positive reform in their respective institutions.

Secondly, I plan to reach out to existing networks of academics and other relevant actors beyond academia with an interest in the reforms suggested by my research. My supervisor, Professor Rainbow Murray, who has been deeply involved with Queen Mary University of London EDI work, has informed me that Professor Kate Malleson, QMUL's Senior Academic Lead for Diversity, is part of a UK-wide network of academics with similar positions. I plan to contact Professor Malleson to ask for her support to share my publications flowing from this research with this network. In addition, during my PhD, I have collated a number of contacts of professionals working across many sectors who have expressed an interest in seeing the results of my work. Most prominent and recent among this list includes former BBC journalist Carrie Gracie (2019), who launched a book *Equal*, inspired by her experience of pay inequality and secrecy around pay inside the media giant in September 2019 (Cowdrey, 2018). I plan to disseminate my research publications from this thesis to this compiled personal network and to my participants who provided contact details for this purpose.

Finally, I plan to reach out to AdvanceHE to highlight that while the Athena SWAN charter is admirable in intent, significant problems in implementation should be considered. While I was supporting my own departments initial forays into the Athena SWAN process, I learned of advice applicants are given that they should ideally have their application read by several 'critical friends' before submission. I would like to prepare a 'critical friend' report for AdvanceHE that summaries in

a practical manner the friendly, but firm critique of Athena SWAN demonstrated in Chapter 8 of this thesis.

Appendix N: Future Article Plans

This thesis has also generated my ambitious plan to turn my extensive PhD data collection into an array of peer-reviewed publications and develop two existing collaborations under my existing HESA data access agreement. I would like to turn this thesis into a monograph, but for that to be financially feasible, I will need to secure a permanent academic job. To improve my chances of that achievement, I must first publish articles derived from central threads of this thesis.

<u>Articles drawing on thesis chapters:</u>

- **Social Pay Discussion Behaviour: An Analysis of Two English Universities**
  This article would draw on analysis of my original Qualtrics survey on social pay comparison behaviour using binomial logistic regression as presented in Chapter 7 of this thesis. I plan to submit it to Work, Employment and Society.

- **Paradoxical Pay Transparency: A Weapon in the Battle against Pay Inequality or Against Discussing It?**
  This article would be based on the first half of thematic analysis presented in Chapter 8 of this thesis. I would like to submit it to the Human Resource Management Journal.

- **Social Pay Comparison: A Tool of Collective Resistance to 'Transparent' Bureaucracy**
  This article would be based on the second half of the thematic analysis presented in Chapter 9 of this thesis. I would like to submit it to the British Journal of Industrial Relations.

<u>Research notes re-visiting cut thesis material:</u>

- **A Second Look at Social Pay Comparison: Relationship with Salary**
  This would be a research note drawing again on my Qualtrics survey data but seeking to incorporate income data. Income questions were included in the survey to enable this analysis, but the response to these questions was much lower, hence it was excluded from focus on this thesis. It merits further exploration, however, to identify potential trends, which is why I would like to explore this in a research note to be submitted to Work, Employment, and Society.

- **Income Non-Response in National Surveys: An Alternative Measure of the Income-Talk Taboo**

  This research note would revisit work conducted for but not included in this thesis. It would seek to suggest a potential alternative way of measuring the extent of the income-talk taboo using non-response to income questions in existing surveys as a proxy measure. This note would be submitted to Work, Employment and Society.

Articles using HESA data access

- **The Gender Pay Gap In Academia: A Case Study of UK Business Schools**

  This article will use existing HESA data procured to conduct a number of detailed analyses on the GPG (and G/EPG) inside UK business schools, including OLS and Fixed Effects regression and Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition. This piece is a collaboration with Professors Geraldine Healy (QMUL) and Almudena Sevilla (UCL) already nearly drafted. We plan to submit it to the British Journal of Industrial Relations.
- **The Gender Pay Gap in UK Higher Education: Does the Public Sector Equality Duty Matter?**

  This article would also use the existing HESA data procured to explore the impact of regulative pay transparency force, the Public Sector Equality Duty, on the GPG in UK HE. This paper would employ the difference-in-difference method and would be a collaboration with Danula Gamage (QMUL). We would plan to submit this article to the Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society.